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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Being accepted: An evaluation of the aboriginal student policy in a Canadian university.

BY

James Thomas Walton ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1996

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled BEING ACCEPTED: AN EVALUATION OF THE ABORIGINAL STUDENT POLICY IN A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY submitted by James Thomas Walton in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Chris, Elizabeth, and James.

Abstract

The research problem for the study was to examine the effects of the Aboriginal Student Policy of a university in western Canada on the participation and academic persistence of aboriginal people at the university.

Interviews were conducted with 19 participants representing aboriginal students and prospective students, university service providers, faculty members and administrators, and government.

Results showed that policy measures such as the Transition Year Program, the aboriginal student quota, the Aboriginal Student Policy, and Native Student Services were regarded as most important by respondents. Other successful measures were the aboriginal student law program, set-aside faculty seats, outreach programs, better interactions between aboriginal students and instructors, and special programs for aboriginals.

Unexpressed policy goals were identified, including education leading to better conditions and employment prospects for aboriginals, aboriginal university students being role models, increasing aboriginal control over their post-secondary education, and improving the university's standing by achieving the quota.

The study's overall finding was that many of the policy measures have been successfully implemented and that aboriginal student participation and academic persistence was improving. However, the measures such as improving sensitivity to aboriginal students and incorporating aboriginal content in curricula still required considerable effort on the part of participants in the process in order to be fully implemented.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my wife, Chris, and children Elizabeth and James (in age order) for help, support and encouragement in this and previous educational endeavours.

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Finally, and very importantly, I would like to thank my respondents, who spent much time describing and explaining their views and in checking that I had recorded them correctly.

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview and Purpose of the Study

Introduction

Participation rates in post-secondary education revealed that students from disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to attend post-secondary institutions than those from more advantaged circumstances (Advanced Education, 1989). Only 3% of a western province's aboriginal people had "university with degree" as the highest level of education compared with 10.8% for the whole population. The same source revealed also that 70% of Native students entering university did not complete their program and receive a degree, compared with 48% for the general population. Although some of the students, both Native and non-Native, not completing degrees left programs to go on to complete other university programs successfully, the data showed that Native people were underrepresented at the university level, and furthermore, were less likely to complete their programs than non-Native students. Similar findings were revealed in studies at the vocational college level in the province (J.T.Walton, 1991 and 1992).

Such data provided a basis for policy development in the late 1980's. Towards the end of the decade, policies were in place both in government (Alberta Advanced Education, 1989), and in post secondary institutions (e.g. University of Alberta, 1991) to correct under-representation of disadvantaged groups. It was decided to assess the impact of such policies in one post-secondary institution from the points of view of stakeholders including representatives from government, the university, participants, and potential participants from one of the disadvantaged groups: aboriginal people.

The Study Focus

The research examined ways in which the policy of aboriginal student access and academic persistence had been addressed in a major Canadian university, from the point of view of the stakeholders mentioned.

The main research questions were:

1. what policy measures have been taken to improve aboriginal participation and academic persistence in the selected university; and
2. how successful have these measures been in increasing aboriginal participation and academic persistence, from the viewpoint of the stakeholders?

Subsidiary questions included:

3. to what extent have the policy measures been implemented;
4. what is the current rate of aboriginal student participation in various faculties and programs;
5. what are the participation trends over recent years;
6. do participants have goals other than those expressed in the policy; and
7. which of the steps taken to improve aboriginal student participation and academic persistence have been the most effective?

Significance of the Study

Considerable research in the area of access to post-secondary education by disadvantaged groups in general, and aboriginal people in particular, has been carried out.

Hughes (1990) considered aboriginal student access to university education in the province from a problem-structuring approach using assumptional analysis (Dunn, 1981) with a focus on policy formation. The current study was complementary in that it considered academic persistence as well as participation, as an in-depth study of one institution, and adopted a policy monitoring an early evaluation approach (Dunn, 1981).

According to a number of authors who have conducted extensive literature reviews (e.g., Vickers and Adams, 1977, Peinovich, 1986), factors which distinguish between advantaged and disadvantaged groups or individuals include: social class, race, ethnic background, place of birth, and gender. The present study focused on aboriginal people as disadvantaged in relation to several of these factors.

Much of the research on adult student participation has focused on barriers or deterrents to participation. Furthermore, the subject of deterrents to participation has been examined in many different ways in the literature.

Some authors have carried out research involving adults who do not participate in further education. For example, Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) applied statistical methods to data gathered from large samples of the adult general public. From the analysis, the authors derived a list of six factors of deterrence: lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost, and personal problems. This study was replicated in a rural community college setting (Gibson, 1991), with results similar to those from the original study.

In a later paper, Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) analyzed their original data base, using cluster analysis. By this method they were able to produce a typology of adults in terms of self reported deterrents to participation.

Other authors, for example Peinovich (1986) in a review of the literature, have argued that factor analysis of this type is an insufficiently penetrating method of investigation, and that barriers to participation are subtle, hidden, and "may in fact be a construction of all the possible sociological factors operating together" (p. 1).

Several workers have conducted studies to investigate this suggestion. For example, in his initial study, Harvey (1988) used qualitative methods to examine the personal constructs of aboriginal people in relation to success and, among other things, to institutions.

Harvey's initial study involved detailed interviews with respondents, and consequently probed some of the more personalized or cultural non-institutional deterrents to participation. Harvey interviewed 32 members of a small aboriginal community. The responses were used to prepare a survey instrument which was then used to produce a working definition of the aboriginal perception of success, which consisted of a complex construction of various sociological factors.

As an alternative to studying non-participants, many authors have studied barriers to adult education as perceived by adults actively involved in formal learning. For example, Watt and Boss (1987) used a questionnaire approach with a sample of 140 adults involved in basic academic upgrading and business skills courses in a rural setting. In this study the authors found that, in contrast to other studies, attitudinal barriers were reported more frequently than situational, institutional and informational barriers.

Conducting studies among participants has been criticized by several authors. Peinovich (1986), for example, argued that such studies "explain non-participation among the participants, but fail to explain non-participation among the non-participants" (p. 13). This points towards a need to include non-participants into the respondent group.

Academic persistence in adult students has also been examined by a variety of authors. Some authors have indicated from theoretical (Tinto, 1975) or empirical (J.T.Walton, 1991) perspectives that input factors can predict dropout, whereas others such as Sharkey (1987) and his coworkers have reported on the effect of policies aimed at retaining minority students in the post-secondary setting.

The preceding review shows that much of the research into this topic has concentrated on specific aspects of aboriginal student participation and academic persistence, or has reported on data collected from only one of the stakeholder groups. The current study examined those measures, expressed in the aboriginal student policy, established to reduce institutional barriers to participation at a university, and to increase academic persistence, from the points of view of major stakeholders.

Many studies have been carried out which report on policy evaluation or monitoring. An example is Polivka's work on the Florida

Juvenile Justice system (1983) which illustrated how a statistical approach was fruitful in monitoring the effects of policies. A round table discussion approach was used by Mock (1984) in examining multicultural education in early childhood education. The findings showed that qualitative methods could also provide useful insights into policy evaluation.

According to Patton and Sawicki (1986), monitoring outcomes is part of a policy evaluation continuum. In the authors' view, monitoring policy outcomes is the process of identifying key variables and measuring changes in these variables after policy implementation. Evaluation, on the other hand, examines the extent to which policy objectives were achieved. In a similar vein, Hogwood and Gunn (1984), defined the monitoring of policy outcomes as collecting information about the extent to which program goals are being met.

In the present study, a policy monitoring and early evaluation approach provided a useful technique by which qualitative and non-qualitative methods could be used to examine the implementation of the aboriginal student policy in a large university's programs from the perspectives of the major interested parties and groups. Since the policy was adopted relatively recently and all the policy goals have not yet been reached, the study may be classed as policy monitoring or early evaluation on the continuum described by Patton and Sawicki.

According to the Government of Alberta's report on the transition needs of Native Students (1991), "a combination of circumstances contributes to the fact that significantly fewer students of aboriginal ancestry complete high school or a post secondary program than is the case for non-aboriginal Albertans." The purpose of the current study was to identify those aspects of the aboriginal student policy which have been effective in overcoming the effects of this combination of circumstances and which have increased aboriginal student participation and academic persistence in the programs offered by a large university in western Canada.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to one group disadvantaged in terms of university participation and academic persistence: aboriginal people.
2. The study was delimited to the focus on one university in a western province in Canada.
3. The study was delimited to data collected from September 1992 to May 1994, with the majority of data collection taking place from August to October 1993. During this period, 19 respondents were interviewed in depth.
4. The study was delimited to the investigation of one policy document with two goals and twelve objectives.
5. The study was delimited to include data from government, university, student, and potential student respondents.

Assumptions

The following were assumed for the study:

1. that a decision-theoretic evaluation and monitoring approach, as outlined by Dunn (1981) was appropriate for the study;

2. that respondents in the user-survey analysis provided data from which it was possible to make explicit policy objectives which were both expressed and latent; and
3. that participant stakeholders presented honestly and accurately their perceptions on the policy document and on the success of implemented measures derived from the document.

Limitations

1. The study was of one disadvantaged group, and one university, and the generalizability of the study is limited.
2. The study was limited by the possibility of obtaining relevant and appropriate data through interview and document analysis.
3. The study was limited by the researcher's ability to understand the meanings placed on the policy documents, implemented measures, and other issues raised by the participants.

Definitions

Native, aboriginal person: For the purpose of the study the same definition of aboriginal person was adopted as was used by the university in its 1993-94 calendar. "For the purposes of application and admission to the 3[university], and in accordance with the Constitution Act, 1982, Part II, Section 35(2), an aboriginal applicant is an Indian, Inuit, or Metis person of Canada, or a person who is accepted by one of the aboriginal peoples of Canada as a member of their community."

Academic persistence, persistence: To continue in a university program, meeting the program requirements during the program and eventually receiving the qualification offered by the program. A student who is eligible to continue and is continuing on the program is persisting.

Dropping out: A student who fails to persist to the successful completion of the program, or the act of leaving a program before its completion. In most cases this represents a failure in academic persistence; in some cases, however, students drop out of a program in order to take a different program at university. These "drop outs' may be among the most successful students at a university.

Transition Year Program (TYP): A program offered at the university which allowed aboriginal students to enter the university and take a reduced course load, and which allowed access to university faculties on successful completion. The program was operated by Native Student Services, which also provided academic and personal support to students.

Native Student Services (NSS): A university unit, part of Student Services, which offered a variety of counseling and support services to aboriginal students.

Set-aside seats: A faculty place, usually in addition to the normal quota which was reserved for an aboriginal candidate who satisfied the admission requirements.

Quota: The proportional representation of aboriginal students in the student body. The university calendar (1993-94) defined the undergraduate base as 24 000, with the aboriginal student quota (five per cent) as 1 200 students.

School of Native Studies: An academic unit offering the degree of BA in Native Studies. The school was attended by both aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Chapter two introduces ideas and commentary from the literature which relate to the study. The chapter is divided into several sections dealing with the underrepresentation of aboriginal people at the post-secondary level, ways of correcting this underrepresentation, aboriginal involvement in planning and operating programs, factors which affect participation and academic persistence, program design, and entry requirements. These sections relate to aspects of the aboriginal student policy under review.

The literature review is not an exhaustive review of all aboriginal post-secondary policies or programs, nor is it meant to be; the aim is to introduce views of the problems and examples of the types of approach which have been used in other provinces or countries. These include: (a)teacher education programs for aboriginals, (b)career education programs, (c)English remediation, (d)equitable admission requirements, (e)aboriginal involvement in program planning and operation, (f)student involvement in their own learning, (g)law preparation programs for aboriginals, (h)management programs, (i)outreach delivery of programs, (j)inclusion of aboriginal culture and lifestyle elements in curriculum, (k)tutoring and support for aboriginal students, (l)providing a Native student centre on campus, (m)instructional methods and communications, (n)orientation programs, (o)satellite campuses, (p)community support of programs, (q)use of students' first language in instruction, (r)pre-college programs, (s)employment programs, (t)distance education, (u)reduced pace programs, (v)group development among students, (w)family and community support of students, (x)modified programs, and (y)written policies for post-secondary institutions.

Other studies (e.g., More, 1981) have produced detailed reviews describing numbers of post secondary programs - in many cases describing the same type of program offered at different locations. In contrast, this review selected examples of types of approach for the purpose of relating them to the aboriginal student policy at one university.

Underrepresentation

Several authors have indicated that aboriginal students tend to be underrepresented at the post-secondary level. In its joint sessions, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (1990) discussed several issues relating to aboriginal post-secondary education. Among the points raised were the importance of recruiting more aboriginal students to college, and the beneficial effects on integrating aboriginal culture into the curriculum.

In its demographic overview of the Native populations in Alberta, the Department of Native Affairs (1985), using data derived from the 1981 census, showed that the aboriginal sector of the population had a significantly lower level of education attainment than the rest of the population,

> on average the highest level of education attained by Native persons in each sub group (i.e. Inuit, Status Indian, Non Status Indian and Metis) was significantly lower than non-Natives. (p. 25)

The report went on to indicate that over 40% of status Indians had less than a grade 8 education compared with 31% of the Metis and Non Status population and 18% among the Inuit (p. 25). The report also indicated that employment rates were significantly lower for aboriginal people.

> Only one quarter of all Natives under 65 years of age were employed in June 1981 compared to more than half of the total Alberta population. (p. 33)

The report went on to show that aboriginals made up a small share of several occupational categories, natural sciences, engineering and mathematics (0.8%), managerial or administrative (0.9%), medicine and health (0.1%), teaching and related occupations (1.1%), sales (1.1%), and clerical (1.4%).

Flack (1980) reported on two surveys conducted in 1973-74 and 1975-76 by the American Society of Allied Health Professions and the American Hospital Association to assess the representation of racial and ethnic minorities in allied health fields through their enrollment in educational programs. The report showed Native Americans to be one of the groups underrepresented in the programs.

Hargroves' (1983) study of what 1982 Boston public high school graduates were doing after graduation indicated that aboriginal and other minority groups were less well represented in both attending post-secondary institutions and in employment, than the majority group students.

The October 1985 statement by the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada reflected the provincial ministers' concern that those students with special needs should be able to access Canada's post-secondary institutions. Aboriginals were included as one of the underrepresented groups.

Correcting Underrepresentation

Many authors have described programs introduced for Native students which addressed the problem of underrepresentation and which have been successful in improving participation, academic persistence, or both, in some way.

In his 1994 paper, Abel indicated that several state institutions in the United States were beginning to meet the needs of underrepresented diverse populations by offering teacher education programs. Several of these projects were aimed at aboriginal people. For example, one of the universities in Montana was implementing The Systematic Teacher Excellence Preparation Project to help Native American and other mathematics and science teachers.

Archibald (1986) described a teacher education program in British Columbia which to date, in 1986, had produced 75 graduates. The author described how the use of community based field centres and the inclusion of Indian studies had helped reduce the withdrawal rate from 21% in 1974-75 to 6% in 1985-86 (p. 36).

Also important to the success of the program were aspects of aboriginal control which included an advisory committee with aboriginal membership and strong links to Native communities and organizations.

Budke (1981) outlined 183 ongoing projects in career education, vocational education, and education and work. Several of these programs were aimed at aboriginal tribes and organizations.

In its report on ethnic diversity and enrollment, degrees granted, and undergraduate applications in Colorado public institutions of post-secondary education for the years 1986-90, the Colorado Commission of Higher Education, Denver, indicated that from 1986-1990 minorities were underrepresented in degree attainment compared to enrollment. This reflected lower than average academic persistence. Over the same period, however, minority enrollment increased from 10.8% to 13.6%. The report also pointed out that the employment of minorities in higher education positions increased from 15.2% in 1986 to 16.1% in 1990.

In a report on educational opportunity for underrepresented minority students in California, Martinez (1985) reported on how the problem of underrepresentation was being addressed. Methods included the remediation of any English language deficiencies, and the establishment of equitable college admission requirements.

Aboriginal Involvement in Planning and Operating Programs

Many of the successful programs have incorporated enhanced levels of aboriginal involvement in the planning and operation of programs. In his 1979 survey of Native Indian teacher education projects in Canada, More (1981) pointed out that many of the projects involved aboriginal people in setting up and staffing the programs. The author described thirteen teacher education programs in Canada for aboriginal people. In a speech to the Canadian Education Association conference in spring 1981, More outlined the scope of the projects:

> NTEP, NORTEP, ITEP, NITP, and just plain TEP, IMPACTE, ISUPS, PENT, and BUNTEP. Strange acronyms have been dancing across the

> education stage in Canada during the past decade. Behind these acronyms is an increasing number of Native Indians in colleges of education and in the schools - training to be teachers. (p. 66)

The author described a 1977 pilot project for Native students. The program led to the B.Ed. degree (elementary), and had the aim of training teacher aides, education workers and other aboriginal people to become teachers. According to More, the program was a success largely because of its on-campus, off-campus format, which allowed students to keep their jobs while still completing their degree requirements in four years.

Speaking of the progress made by the projects, More said that

> it is estimated that over 600 Native Indians are enrolled in specialized teacher training programs in Canada today. Native Indians at the community, provincial and national level are deeply involved in the development and operation of these programs. Over 700 teachers are working with these students in their classrooms almost every week. Each year the number of Native Indians certified to teach rises dramatically. There is an exciting feeling that significant improvements in the education of Indian children are accruing. The training of Native Indian people as teachers has become a major effort in this country. (p. 62)

An outreach design has been successful in business training for Metis students. In this program, at the vocational college level, which was planned and managed in cooperation with Metis communities, Metis students were able to complete the first year of one of three business programs while still living at home on the settlement. The program increased both the participation and academic persistence of aboriginal students. As in the program More described, students were able to work in the settlement while completing their studies, and the on-campus, off-campus model probably contributed to the success of the program (J.T.Walton (1994), unpublished).

Brose (1988) noted that academic persistence and performance improved when aboriginal student nurses were involved in their own learning. According to the author, although the students resisted taking responsibility for their own learning at first, they became involved later when they saw the successful application of their own ideas. Brose indicated that

> the project demonstrated that it is possible and even desirable to involve Native nursing students in their own learning. Without exception, students commented favorably on the learning atmosphere. They developed better reading and writing skills, grew in communication techniques because of the classroom discussions and seemed to develop increased self esteem and confidence. Moreover after eight months all 20 students remained in the program. (p. 13)

In his study on the dropout rate for aboriginal school level students, P. Walton (1989) indicated that since 1980, community involvement in schools had had a positive effect on student retention.

> Since 1980 the dropout rate for Native Indian students has decreased, attendance has improved, the graduation rate has increased, and communication between the Indian bands and the school district has improved. The changes made within the school district, coupled with the positive developments within the Indian bands can probably be credited with these successes. The changes made within the school district were based mostly on recommendations made by the Advisory Committee. (p. 6)

The program described by P. Walton began in 1978 with the creation of the Indian Education Consultative Committee in a small town in the Shuswap School District 89. Approximately 180 aboriginal students from five local bands attended public schools in the district. In 1982 a small working committee was formed with representatives from the bands. The working committee made recommendations to the larger committee which accepted a philosophy statement, goals and objectives, description of responsibilities for school district and band, and job descriptions for teachers and support workers.

According to P.Walton, the aboriginal collaboration in planning and setting policy led to considerable improvements. In the author's view this project showed that

> the success rates of Indian students may be improved when school districts and Indian bands work together towards that objective. (1989, p. 11)

In his report on legislation relating to aboriginal education in Canada, Charles (1981) pointed out that at the secondary school level, the number of aboriginal students attending provincial schools had increased dramatically over the previous 20 years. He also mentioned that the dropout rate was, however, very high but that schools run by aboriginal people were more successful in improving the retention rate.

Analyzing this issue, Charles (1981) pointed out that the law had been applied differently and unfavorably to aboriginals in regard to education, and that legislation affecting aboriginal education had been written by white men from their own point of view, ignoring the cultural perspective of aboriginals.

In Charles' view, this was partly the reason for the inability of some provincial schools to improve "lower participation in secondary schools, particularly among the 14-17 age groups" and to help aboriginal students to "adjust to a new environment" (p. 57).

He argued that both federal and provincial governments needed to adjust their policies and practices

> so that Native people are involved in all phases of the education of their children and are in a position to assume more responsibility for the provision of that education. (p. 21)

Discussing the same time period, Ward (1986) argued that, from 1972 to 1982, the Canadian Government made unilateral decisions relating to Indian education. One example was the Government's handling of cuts in the noon lunch supplement program, others were educational services to off-reserve aboriginals and post-secondary educational assistance.

Writing about the United States' situation, Whiteman (1986) argued that, beginning in 1568, American Indians had been thrust into an alien education and environment in which their languages had no relevance or validity from the perspective of their teachers. According to the author, this had led to aboriginal student failure in the school system until about 1972 when, through legislation in the United States, aboriginal involvement in education increased. According to Whiteman, aboriginal self determination and involvement in education decision making have characterized federally funded education programs since the 1970's in the United States.

According to Telidetzki (1988), Native people in Canada have been placed at a disadvantage through being underrepresented in the legal profession. She went on to describe a program which had been in effect for the previous 13 to 15 years, designed to prepare potential Native students for law studies at the University of Saskatchewan. The author felt that this program was beginning to fill the void in the legal profession and should continue to do so until the Native community was more equally represented.

> Racial and ethnic groups should be proportionately represented in the legal profession. Native people in Canada have never had any significant representation in the legal system of this country. (p. 49)

Telidetski argued that language is one reason for underrepresentation. In her view, English is a second language for aboriginal people and she argued that many had not been taught it very well at school. She also felt that aboriginal involvement in setting up and in operating the program was important as was the commitment of the teaching staff.

> The success of the program is assured if (a) there is a large Native involvement in the program to make the Natives feel that the program is there to serve them, and (b) if there is a commitment from the teaching staff to ensure that they have the qualification to enter first year law. (p. 56)

Telidetzki went on to point out that despite successfully completing the program of legal studies for Native people, in the early years over half of the graduates failed their first year in law school. However, she reported that after an evaluation report the first year law students success rate increased to 73%.

Discussing the program in general, Telidetzki argued that preparatory programs such as this and law school entry policies for aboriginal people were important in establishing a reasonable representation of aboriginal people in the legal profession. Writing in 1988, she pointed out that

> over the past decade, Native involvement in the legal profession has increased. This increase can be credited to most Canadian law schools' special admission policies and to the Program of Legal Studies for Native People. Their existence have made all people aware that Native involvement is important in today's society. As long as this importance remains recognized it should not be long before Native people have equal representation in the legal profession. The Native community strongly believes that through education this is possible. (p. 58)

In a further example of aboriginal involvement in planning and controlling their own education, Mazurek (1988) reported that The Four Worlds Development Project evolved from a meeting in December 1982, at the University of Lethbridge, involving Native Elders, community leaders, multicultural educators and professionals. He went on to point out that

> the formal focus of the meeting was to address the issues of alcohol and drug abuse, but it quickly grew to encompass a much broader vision of human problems and of potential for development "helping people, and their institutions and communities learn how to continue to live in ways that promote their own development". (p. 87)

Mazurek indicated that, in 1984, the School of Management began to offer the Business Enterprises and Self Governing Systems of Indian, Inuit, and Metis Peoples (BESS) Program in management. Mazurek indicated that the BESS program was based on the notion that

> Native peoples want thriving communities moving toward greater economic self sufficiency on a secure land-base within the context of their own cultural values and self governing systems. (p. 87)

He went on to indicate that two educational opportunities were institutionalized. One alternative was for students to take a 40 course Bachelor of Management degree with a concentration in "BESS", another was to take a 9 course "BESS" certificate in the School of Management (p. 87).

In Mazurek's view, several factors combined to create a successful program at Lethbridge's university.

> With a sound philosophical basis for its initiatives, with vigorous programs in place, with program successes behind it, and with the enthusiastic support of faculty and administration, the future of Native education at the University of Lethbridge looks even brighter than its shining past. (p. 88)

Smith and Pace (1987) described a model for social work education among the Micmac. They pointed out that a four day workshop on social conditions and services on Micmac reserves in Nova Scotia held at Liscombe Lodge in June 1982 identified a need for university level training in order to improve the social services offered on reserves. According to the authors, this began the educational movement towards the qualification of social service personnel and self government for the Micmac people.

The model and delivery of the program was based on work by Malcolm Knowles (1978) and involved adult learners who were actively participating in, and responsible for, their learning. The program entailed group work, role play, and audio visual techniques; instructors encouraged feedback. To allow them more control over their own learning, the students were also consulted on program decisions.

The assessment of the Post-secondary Education Assistance Program and the Occupational Skills Training Program conducted by the Ontario Indian Education Council (1981), showed that while aboriginal involvement in setting up programs for Native education was important, funding considerations were of crucial importance also.

> The time frames, the amounts of money and the restrictions imposed upon students are arbitrary and unrealistic. It should be unnecessary to point to the discrepancy between general Native income and living standards in comparison with the majority of the population. To emphasize that present PSEAP [Post-secondary Education Assistance Program] guidelines are generally unacceptable. If assistance for the average Canadian student is inadequate then how much more so is the case for Indian students. (p. 111)

Barnhardt (1982) highlighted several instances in Native education in Alaska where participation by community members was important at all levels of education.

Dealing with the importance of community involvement in political, social, economic and cultural development in Metis settlements, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in Alberta (1984) stressed the unique nature and needs of Metis culture and lifestyle. They indicated that the legislation forming the foundation for governance of Metis settlements should incorporate consideration of these needs.

In his study of the Native outreach program at the University of Calgary, Friesen (1986) outlined the history of progress in terms of aboriginal student participation and retention.

He reported that the program began in 1972 at Stoney Indian Reserve. By 1986, 100 Native students had graduated, many of whom began their post-secondary education in outreach programs offered by the university.

He pointed out that the outreach program had a positive influence on higher education in aboriginal home communities. According to Friesen, initially the program at Stoney Indian reserve was disorganized, but after 15 years of operation the outreach program had become more effective and more appropriately aligned to community needs.

> One of the practical aspects of an on site university program has to do with the maintenance of tranquillity for student family life. Since most of the students involved in the initial years of the program were parents with children, they were delighted to find that they complete three of the four years of a degree program without having to leave their families, relocate them or try to function in the context of two different living environments, one at college and the other in weekend trips home. (p. 4)

Friesen (1986) indicated that many of the first graduates chose to become elementary teachers. The need to prepare Native teachers was a prime factor in the development of the program. Friesen pointed out that Native teachers have several culturally related advantages in teaching Native students; these included facility with aboriginal language, social knowledge and demonstrating to students that Native people can become teachers.

The author noted that the tutoring element of the program, which included tutors attending various classes, taking notes, helping with written assignments, and going over the notes with students after hours was very important. The personal component was also valuable, and this consisted largely of personal matters such as listening to people in conflict situations.

As regards incorporation of aboriginal material into school curricula, Friesen indicted that local themes and interests were included where possible by the new aboriginal teachers. He reported that schools at Fort Chipewyan were commended for initiating a community newspaper, encouraging community use of facilities, employing local university students as substitute teachers, promoting Native culture through teaching arts and crafts, and hosting such events as community dances.

A negative aspect of this effort was that Fort Chipewyan schools suffered criticism with regard to failing to maintain academic standards or providing relevant curricula.

Another negative aspect highlighted by Friesen related to problems with parental involvement in the education of their children.

> Students in the Fort Chipewyan program discovered that parental involvement in education matters was minimal for several different reasons and they could not merely be described as being disinterested. Many of their contacts suggested that the habit of a few outspoken individuals to offer their opinions at meetings drove the more timid persons away. (p. 12)

Friesen (1986) went on to point out that when the trainee teachers went back to university, transition to campus life for the final year of a degree requirement could be traumatic. As one way to ameliorate the effect of this transition, the University of Calgary established a "resting place" on campus known as the Native Centre. This centre provided students with considerable support.

The author pointed out that the outreach program was a success and that the program achieved retention rates of 80% compared with only 20% in initial years.

In conclusion, Friesen indicated that several factors contributed to the success of a program such as the one he described. These included respect for aboriginal values, a philosophy of biculturalism, emphasis on all aspects of personal development and the maintenance of acceptable academic standards.

Gayfer (1991), described issues relating to the education of Native people, including post-secondary education and its financing. The author identified the federal and provincial governments as important players and highlighted the importance of the relationship between the different levels of government and post-secondary institutions.

Green (1990), in his paper on the coming of age of aboriginal education argued that, as aboriginal people became more aware of the need to control their own destiny, they would assume a greater role in the development of the education system and in the creation of a curriculum appropriate to their needs.

> In the 21st Century, Native education will assume a distinctive Native flavor; and Indian education will begin to do what all education systems should do - promote the culture of the society it serves. Bearing in mind that culture is dynamic in nature and adaptive in purpose, this does not mean halting the development of the Native societies in Canada. It means moving at a rate and along a path that is satisfactory and meaningful to the people for whom the education is intended. (p. 37)

Green made the additional point that involvement in a process can lead to a sense of ownership, and that this can lead to more meaningful results than those produced by outside agencies such as the Department of Indian Affairs.

> Native education is most likely to be successful if the control of Native education is in the hands of the Natives. This does not mean that Indian Affairs cannot and has not done a decent job under the circumstances, but for an idea or concept to be accepted by someone, that someone must first accept ownership of the idea and thus embrace it. The Native people of Canada have not fully accepted the so called "white education" and consequently have not benefited much from it. (p. 39)

Josephson (1986) made a strong argument that "Indian people of North America must take full and absolute control of their own destiny" (p. 3). He argued that aboriginal people should

> establish their own universities and exert complete control over them: in other words these institutions should avoid affiliation with - and certainly the sanction of - existing universities. (p. 3)

The basis of Josephson's argument was that in some cases the English language has been "the primary instrument through which ethnic minority values are gradually assimilated into the western white cultural monolith." He felt that English should be taught strictly as a means of communication and should be stripped of its cultural biases. In his view, the system he had observed in Nigeria produced assimilation whereas in Saudi Arabia he had observed English being used in a culturally neutral way which did not produce assimilation.

He felt that Canadian aboriginal people should obtain control of their own universities in order to avoid the fate of the Hausa Moslem Nigerians. In their case Josephson felt there were

> no Nigerians of other cultural, tribal or linguistic affiliations - there are no Africans, just pale imitations of their former colonizers. There are no African blacks. That revolution has been lost. (p. 6)

In Josephson's view,

> if Canadian Indians want the same thing to happen to their own values, they will be content with Native studies courses and the limited career opportunities of the few, current teacher education programs, and such things as Indian "cultural colleges" (which have no degree granting privileges). If they don't want this to happen they will maintain the momentum of their own revolution not by retrenching and thereby losing what they have already gained but by taking the next logical step, setting up and controlling their own universities. (p. 6)

LaRocque (1978) made similar points in her report on the history of white control of aboriginal education in Canada. She pointed out that assimilation or "civilization" had been the persistent theme of Euro-Canadians whose main aim was to "civilize" and "Christianize" the Indians.

In a survey to identify the vocational educational needs of special populations and the strategies used by organizations, including community colleges, to meet these needs, Nacson (1980) found that the planning process tended to be more coordinated at the community college level than at the school and community organization levels. She also pointed out that, at that time, there were rarely any systematic attempts to assess the effects of various strategies and programs.

Suggesting that a sense of educational partnership is crucial in developing successful post-secondary education programs for aboriginal students, Riffel and Sealey (1987) described education in Norway House, Manitoba. The methods included using aboriginal languages, reducing students' apprehension about programs, and encouraging parental and community involvement in the process. The authors also felt that academic upgrading was a useful precursor to post-secondary education.

McKenzie (1987), in his study on service delivery in Canada's aboriginal communities, explained that community programs now tended to emphasize community control as opposed to traditional systems which were perceived by aboriginals to be agents of colonization. The author concluded that Native control could empower communities and encourage responsive service but also explained that funding and jurisdictional disputes could complicate the process.

Factors affecting participation and academic persistence

Several authors have examined the factors involved in aboriginal and other minority student participation and success in post-secondary educational programs.

In a study examining the general principles of student attrition conducted between 1973 and 1986, Stuhr (1987) concluded that there were many possible reasons why students drop out and that skill and experience are needed to identify these reasons and prescribe the correct remedy. In his study, which included a survey of 21 head instructors and 289 students at an Ontario community college, he identified special problems relating to clearly defined groups. One of these was the identity crisis of late adolescence and young adulthood and the other was cultural problems encountered by aboriginal students when working with Caucasian teachers.

Stuhr went on to identify reasons for dropping out. These related to institutional flaws including inappropriate curriculum, inadequate pre-enrollment counseling and student selection, poor instruction, poor communications within the institution and incomplete or misleading information about students. The author pointed to the implementation of aboriginal policy as a way of improving aboriginal student attrition.

In his study over a nine year span with 130 aboriginal freshmen in a teacher preparation program at the University of British Columbia, Whittaker (1986) found that background variables such as age, gender, parenthood, ethnic status, entrance year and locality did not differentiate graduates from non-graduates except that "the married student rate of graduates was significantly higher" (p. 74).

In his study on input variables and adult student persistence, J.T.Walton (1991) found also that marital status (along with two other variables: the number of high school credits reported, and whether the student was a Native student living on a reserve) was a predictor of academic persistence on the business program offered at a vocational centre in Alberta.

In its reference guide for the California State University, and report on student affirmative action, the California State University (1983) pointed out that there were differences between ethnic groups in terms of student life goals, education priorities, satisfaction levels, academic and social issues, finances, and retention. The authors felt that such factors should be borne in mind when designing programs for particular underrepresented ethnic groups.

In her survey of secondary and post-secondary school participation by aboriginals in Manitoba, from 1977 to 1982, Lee (1983) found that financial and institutional barriers seldom hindered access to post-secondary education. She felt that social and cultural factors, however, did create very real barriers. To increase post-secondary participation and retention she argued that additional counseling, distance education and satellite campuses, college introductory and orientation programs, and increased parental involvement were necessary.

Pavel (1991) studied existing models for predicting educational outputs of aboriginal people in North America. The theoretical models pointed to certain implications for practice, such as that family background, post-secondary intentions, and formal and informal academic integration were central to post-secondary educational outcomes. The author also concluded that academic skills, personal abilities, and prior schooling, helped develop student post-secondary intentions. He found that goal commitment was also an important factor in influencing how well integrated into academic life minority students became.

In a study in which the factors to which students attributed school success and failure were examined, Powers (1983) concluded that North American aboriginal students attributed their school achievement more to effort than did Anglos. The factors examined included ability, effort, context, or luck.

Program Design

Several authors have written about methods of program design and have highlighted design elements which have tended to lead to improved participation or academic persistence of aboriginal students in post-secondary institutions. Several of these designs included methods of addressing concerns indicated in the factor analysis literature described above.

Flack (1980) argued that the special enrollment problems of each minority should be considered "separately but not in isolation" (p. 47). He went on to suggest that support systems which included elements such as tutoring and guidance counseling should focus on the total educational environment of the institution with sub-units addressing specific minority group concerns such as those relating to aboriginal post-secondary students.

Writing about a different set of minority students, Taborek and Adamowski (1984) indicated that native Chinese students can have problems in writing since they have little experience in creative or free writing. In the authors' view the way to deal with this problem initially is for instructors to obtain a very basic understanding of Chinese culture and language. The same logic can apply to aboriginal students.

Sweet (1989) indicated that in operating post-secondary distance learning programs, ease of access, availability of student support, use of appropriate educational technology, and institutional response to student needs were important factors in determining student success.

Cummings (1984) reported on an effort to achieve ethnic parity for underrepresented minorities at the University of New Mexico College of Engineering. The program included pre-college and undergraduate programs designed to recruit and retain Hispanic and American aboriginal students. It provided student services including orientation programs, tutoring, personal counseling, summer enrichment and employment programs and scholarship awards.

Elofson and Elofson (1988), writing about school level education for aboriginals, stated that integrated schools that incorporate aboriginal beliefs and values into curriculum and teaching methods were important. They also suggested designs which allowed for the integration of aboriginal cultural material into curriculum. The authors also went on to write more generally about educational endeavours and the post-secondary level, indicating that the success of aboriginal students bred success in others.

> Previously their relatively poor performance had always taught them to believe that they could not do well in the core subjects and that they were, in fact, stupid. Now, however, they are achieving better grades in the core subjects. Their self esteem has improved considerably and evidence suggests that if extra help can be

> brought to them on a regular basis in the future, their improved performance will be permanent.
>
> People tend to become enthusiastic when they succeed. Indian children are no different in this respect from anyone else. Success will do as much as culture classes and a new curriculum to make these students feel at home in our schools. This will eventually bring a change in attitude towards education among Indian communities in general. When Indians begin to give education a higher priority they will become more interested in achievement beyond the high school level. This will inevitably bring more Indians into our universities and thus back into the system as educators. As this happens we will have a new standard to judge our education system. (p. 37)

In their article on distance education and the particular needs of female students, Faith and Sturrock (1990) pointed out that distance education offered obvious advantages for women who interrupted their careers for parenthood and temporary confinement in the home. The authors indicated that distance education had a special role in Canada because of the vast distances involved and the harsh climate.

The authors noted that Native women received specific attention from the distance educators at Athabasca University. The university offered several programs at Native education centres throughout the province and more than 80% of the Native students enrolling in such programs were women. According to Faith and Sturrock, the workshops were effective because they used small groups working at a slow pace and emphasized time and anxiety management.

The authors continued to mention that teleconferencing programs were found useful and supportive by Inuit and Indian women in Labrador and Newfoundland. Faith and Sturrock (1990) concluded by suggesting that

> while by no means all women who study at a distance are, or intend to be, involved in traditional or non-traditional professions (indeed female students much more than males are without goals) it is significant that university curriculum finally takes seriously

> the special challenges women face as they attempt to juggle family and home responsibilities with studies and employment. (p. 19)

Gaylord (1989) indicated that despite efforts to enhance participation by Alaska Native students in the states, colleges and universities, full success had not yet been achieved. The program he described concerned a six week academic enrichment program for college bound aboriginal Alaskans. The program covered subjects such as mathematics and reading, and Gaylord reported that 75% of the 255 students involved went on to enroll in post-secondary courses.

Ninety-two per cent of the group said they would unequivocally recommend the program to other aboriginal students. The author pointed out that 12% of the program's alumni for the 1984-85 summer session and eight per cent from the 1985-86 session had completed a Bachelor Degree in the minimum amount of time required, whereas none of the Alaskan aboriginal students not attending the program had done so.

Hurlburt (1984) reported on a program aimed at helping Native students cope with the demands of the university environment. He described one-on-one tutoring as the most widely used part of the service. This was provided by sessional instructors, work study tutors, and part-time student tutors. The aim of the tutoring service was to provide academic support.

Hurlburt went on to indicate that students were also offered psychological assessment involving aptitude, personality, and vocational interests testing. Also, the program coordinator provided information allowing Native students to obtain services from outside agencies. Study skills groups were also set up in a program which provided three to six weeks of evening sessions.

In their study of Indian and Metis teacher education, Lang and Scarfe (1986) indicated that group development was important for aboriginal students and resulted in "better grades, improved interpersonal relationships and eventual effective participation in mainstream society" (p. 3). The authors went on to argue that

> program designers and implementors should recognize the potential significance and power of peer groups by structuring opportunities for group development into program design and support systems. (p. 3)

In his work on community adult education in the Northwest Territories of Canada over the period 1967-1974, Lidster (1978) argued that outreach was a powerful educational method where communities were scattered in sparsely populated areas. He felt that educators should

> take, where feasible, programs to the people, rather than plucking people out of settlements to take them to the programs. Providing learning experiences in the communities where people live minimizes the disruption of daily life patterns of family and community. It minimizes economic and social stress. Community based programs allow the adult learner to continue, simultaneously, in his or her family role as hunter, trapper, provider and family member. It enables also the adult learner to continue his or her role in the community. (p. 1)

In Lidster's view adult learners have to balance many responsibilities against the desire for education,

> regardless of how intense is the desire for learning held by adults, their personal and community responsibilities come first. Therefore, if learning new things means that they must separate themselves from home and family for an extended period, it may mean that they will have to let the opportunity go by and continue as best they can with the skills and knowledge they now have. (p. 2)

The author went on to propose that a holistic approach should be taken in adult education.

> Adult education must consider the circumstances existing for the whole person, whole family and whole community and operate on the principle of total education for the total population. (p. 3)

MacKenzie and Beaupre (1981) described a post-secondary education program for aboriginal students to train local adults as school counselors in remote areas of Manitoba. The program involved the use of counselors with a Native background and understanding of community cultural values and language, accommodation and child care support, and peer support groups. The authors also indicated that students were able to call home daily and that this seemed to make them more comfortable with the program. In 1985, fifteen trainees graduated with a post-secondary education certificate in school counseling.

Moore-Eyman (1981) reported on programs designed to encourage Native Canadians to continue their education in public universities in Alberta. She pointed out that "In 1975 there were only a dozen identified status Indian graduates from all universities of the province" (p. 109).

The author went on to indicate that the University of Alberta set up the "Morningstar" outreach program, which provided for 37 Native students to go into teaching after a two year certificate program, which was the usual length of program at that time. The students could complete a bachelor degree in a further five years. According to the author, in 1981, 13 aboriginal students had completed the program and this "exceeded the total number of Native teachers in the province" (p. 110), at that time.

Moore-Eyman went on to note that the University of Calgary did not offer modified or shortened programs for aboriginal students but instead had opted for additional support services. The author indicated that these services addressed social as well as academic needs and facilitated the return of aboriginal graduates to aboriginal communities.

Moore-Eyman (1981) noted tutoring, a study area, a student club office, and a student lounge as being effective support measures for aboriginal students studying on university campuses. She quoted aboriginal students as referring to the student centre as a "refuge from the jungle of the city," "a safe place from which to operate on the larger scene," and "my home." (p. 110).

In his review of research on learning styles and aboriginal students, More (1984) pointed out that to establish cultural relevance in a classroom for aboriginal students, changes in instructional methods must complement alterations in course content. His analysis indicated that aboriginal students had strength in holistic processing and simultaneous processing but had a relative weakness in verbal coding. He suggested that teachers may be able to utilize techniques which would be consistent with the strengths of the aboriginal students with whom they were dealing.

Rainer (1980) discussed aspects of aboriginal culture in a self image workshop manual for American Native people. Cultural elements including eagles, feathers, and Indian heroes were included in the manual.

Scollon (1981), in his 1980 study on full participation of Alaska Natives in post-secondary education, examined both participation and student retention. The ethnographic study stressed the importance of considering the university to be a network of institutional practices and values. The study found a high level of discrepancy between embedded institutional structures and stated attitudes of participants.

Scollon also found a fairly large difference between faculty and student perceptions of the functions and structure of the university. In one example given by the author, faculty "help" was sometimes viewed as "paternalistic" and created a pressure which some students cited as a reason for dropping out.

In its report on improving minority student recruitment and retention, the University of Nevada System Student Minority Outreach Task Force (1988) recommended that a written policy encouraging minority student recruitment admission and retention be put in place for institutions desiring to increase aboriginal student recruitment and retention. The task force argued that the formation and implementation of this policy was an institutional responsibility.

Several authors noted that while post-secondary education programs were affected by aboriginal communities as they became involved in development and control, education had a reciprocal effect on the communities in terms of development, and on society in general as, for example, aboriginal people obtained improved opportunities for employment.

Winchell (1980) indicated the relationship between education and community development in his account of federally funded public administrative training for the Navajo Nation in the United States. He argued for a coordinated approach.

> Since early in 1980, efforts have been made to identify areas in which Arizona State University's Native American programs and faculty can coordinate their activities to better serve the State's Indian population, in particular urban Indians. (p. 9)

Reporting on social work education among the Micmac, Smith and Pace (1987) concluded that the effects of aboriginal students obtaining education at the post-secondary level were far reaching in the aboriginal communities.

> It seems imperative for new Native social work education programs to recognize the needs of Native adult learners and their communities, in order to produce a relevant and effective decentralized training program. Students need support in the development of their knowledge of social work, their analytical and English language skills, and their search for self confidence. They often are, or will become, change agents in their communities as they recognize that self government demands educated leaders. (p. 29)

Elofson and Elofson (1988), in their article on aboriginal school level education, indicated that a low level of education and poor standard of living went hand in hand in aboriginal communities. Their comments relate, by extension, to post-secondary education.

> Here, in Alberta the education system is failing totally to meet the special requirements of Indian people. To comprehend the system's inadequacies it is necessary only to examine the astonishing circumstances which exist in Native communities where the unacceptable and school dropout and failure rates go hand in hand with the low standard of living, a truly tragic number of suicides and a frightening number of convictions for criminal offenses. If education is going to reach the Indian people it will have to become more meaningful to them and better suited to their society and lifestyle. (p. 32)

Marsh (1984) reported on vocational training education in Alberta and indicated that vocational centres provided education and job training for adults with less than a high school education. The author said that several of the vocational centres, for example Lac la Biche, served a largely Native population. He pointed out that, while maintaining a focus on the training of adults with special needs, the vocational centres would endeavor individually and cooperatively to provide programs and services designed to enhance the capabilities of Albertans (p. 3).

Marsh went on to indicate that the vocational centres were referred to as "second chance" institutions which could be used as a stepping stone from dropout to university.

In her study investigating retention of Canadian Native graduates of three special education programs in Native community schools, Martyn (1984) showed that during the first year after graduation all students were employed in the field of education and that at the time of writing 88% of subjects spent most years since graduation as educators in Native communities.

In a similar vein, from his survey of thirteen aboriginal teacher education projects in Canada, More (1984) also pointed out that when Native students carried out their post-secondary education in a Native community they tended to go on to teach other Native students. In making the point that it is often beneficial for teacher and student to share the same cultural background, the author noted that

> an increase in the number of Native teachers will attack many of the basic problems of Indian education, particularly in the high turnover rate of teachers in Native communities. (p. 62)

In her review of bilingual and bicultural education in the United States, Medicine (1986) showed the linkage between post-secondary education and self determination, and community control in aboriginal communities. She described the involvement of ethnic studies programs and courses on Native culture and language in curricula and pointed out that, in some cases, aboriginal languages were being used as the language of instruction. In her view, education from an aboriginal perspective had led to cultural revitalization and restoration.

Entry Requirements

Several authors wrote about the entry requirements for university level programs as they related to aboriginal students.

Bridgeman and Carlson (1984) in their survey of needed academic writing skills, which was conducted in 190 academic departments and 34 American and Canadian universities with high foreign student enrollments, found that the different disciplines do not uniformly agree with the writing task demands, and on a single preferred mode of discourse for evaluating entering undergraduate and graduate students.

In their study of minority and female performance in the United States Army's initial rotary wing flight training program, Brown (1980) and his coworkers found that Native Americans did not perform significantly differently than their match sample of majority students. There were some differences noted with the Black and Hispanic groups.

Bok (1982) argued against the importance of rigid admission requirements based on grades and admission tests. In relation to preferential admission for minority students, the author argued that "the evidence suggests that those who oppose such policies have vastly exaggerated the importance of prior grades and standardized test scores" (p. 98). He went on to indicate that majority students with higher grades did not necessarily "deserve" to be admitted in preference to minority students provided both "clearly have the intellectual qualifications to meet the academic standards of the institution" (p. 98).

Summary

The review of literature indicated that there was an underrepresentation of aboriginal students at the post-secondary level and that many special programs had been set up to address this issue. In several cases the initial programs aimed at training aboriginal teachers with the idea that this would improve the educational experience of other aboriginal students. Other programs were established to produce workers in the social area to produce improvements in the aboriginal communities. Career education and the improvement of English language skills were also mentioned

Many writers described programs which had been set up with different levels and types of aboriginal community member involvement. The schemes involved many different concepts, including outreach or distance education delivery methods, student and community involvement in all stages of programs, and incorporating aboriginal centres on campus. The general view was that community involvement and also student involvement in the education process was beneficial.

Several authors examined factors which tended to lead to improved aboriginal student involvement or success in post-secondary education. This led several of them to suggest designs for program implementation including outreach delivery, introductory and pre-college courses, orientation programs, the inclusion of Native content into curriculum, tutoring and counseling, modified programs, support systems, and the recognition of aboriginal student learning styles in the choice of teaching methods.

Authors also pointed out that there was a reciprocal relationship between aboriginal student education and the communities and society as a whole. This notion explains, to some extent, why many of the early programs included community development elements as part of their objectives.

Finally, some authors discussed the entry requirements and testing for aboriginal students, and here the main conclusions centered on making the entry requirements consistent and appropriate to the aboriginal students seeking entrance to the programs.

In chapter six, the points made in the review of related literature are discussed in relation to the university's aboriginal student policy and to the findings from the interviews.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The study was based on the view, as described by Phillips (1990), that people's actions and views are usually based on what they believe to be true; however, it recognized that there is a difference between what "people believe to be true and what really is true, whether or not we can determine this truth at the moment"
(p. 42).

Although the study incorporated elements from statistical and document sources, the majority of research effort went into in-depth interviews. According to Palys (1992) there are several advantages to this technique: participation rates are much higher than for mail-out questionnaires,

> thus volunteer biases are generally less of a problem with interviews. Similarly the interviewer can immediately clarify any confusion about particular questions and incomplete responses can be probed further. (p. 165)

According to Palys, although this process can lead to reactive bias, the biggest disadvantage of extended interviews is in the time and effort required for such a study.

The interview technique also allowed for the decision-theoretic policy evaluation technique (Dunn, 1981, p. 348) to be adopted in order to address unexpressed as well as expressed policy goals and objectives.

Theoretical Orientation

A realist view was adopted as an appropriate theoretical framework for the study. There were a variety of additional data sources which could be used to compare with the data obtained from interviews. Thus, for example, if some interview data indicated that there were a certain number of aboriginal students on campus who identified themselves as such, this could be compared with data obtained from entrance forms by the registrar's office, and with the data obtained from interviews with other respondents. Also, if respondents indicated in the interviews that the university's published entrance regulations contained a particular requirement, this could be compared with the document as published in the university's calendar and with the perceptions of other students.

This is not to contend that the "hard data" from the registrar's office or the "chapter and verse" from the calendar or policy document are the "truth" and that divergent participant statements are therefore false and unimportant. Firstly, the hard data may be inaccurate due to a variety of causes, and secondly written policies are not necessarily applied or implemented as written. If people hold particular views and act on what they believe, it is the "inaccurate" and "false" beliefs which are more important than the truth, even if the truth can be determined. According to Phillips (1990), if one group of people believes that "X is the case," and another group believes that "not-X is the case,"

> the realist holds that both of these views cannot be correct, although, of course, some people believe one or other of these to be true - it is the case that X, or that not-X, but not both. (The realist does not have to believe that we can always settle which of these views, X or not-X is true; the issue is whether both or at best one can be true). (p. 41)

The study attempted to determine what different stakeholders indicated they believed about a certain policy and its implementation and to compare these data from statistical and documentary sources. According to Phillips:

> seekers after enlightenment in any field do the best that they can; they honestly seek evidence, they critically scrutinize it, they are open to alternative viewpoints, they take criticism seriously and try to profit from it, they play their hunches, they stick to their guns, but they also have a sense of when it is time to quit. It may be a dirty, hard, and uncertain game, but it is the only game in town.(p. 38)

Thus, the study reported different perceptions of the situation from the different stakeholder points of view. Where possible, data gathered from statistical and document sources were compared with qualitative data gathered from interviews in an attempt to compare them and produce a comprehensive view.

Research Methodology

The methods involved formal interviews, information from documentary and statistical sources, triangulation, and external appraisal.

Documents and statistical data were collected from university sources, extended interviews were conducted with participants, and the accuracy of data transfer from interview transcripts was validated by external review.

The Research Framework

According to Elmore (1980), policy monitoring is about learning and control. In his view, monitoring helps in learning about program activities and outcomes so that practices can be improved. The study was aimed at learning about activities and outcomes related to the aboriginal student policy, and a decision-theoretic evaluation and monitoring approach was adopted. Dunn (1981) indicated that:

> The key difference between decision-theoretic evaluation, on the one hand, and pseudo and formal evaluation on the other, is that decision-theoretic evaluation attempts to make explicit the latent as well as formal goals and objectives of stakeholders. (p. 348)

Methods included in-depth interviews in the form of a "user-survey analysis ... from intended users and other stakeholders" (p. 352), examination of information from documentary sources, and examination of statistical information on participation and academic persistence rates. The study performed policy monitoring and early evaluation processes. The statistical and documentary sources provided data on what the goals and objectives of the policy were, and what were the results in terms of aboriginal student participation, while the user-survey analysis addressed how successfully the policy had been implemented, in the view of participants and obtained views on the relative importance of the expressed and unexpressed goals.

"An interview protocol with a series of open-ended questions" (Dunn 1981, p. 352) (Appendix 1) was used in the interviews since open-ended questions are useful in determining the "salience or importance of opinions to people, since people tend to mention those matters that are most important to them first" (Palys, 1992, p. 173). This protocol was used by the researcher, who phrased the questions based on this protocol and asked the questions orally during the interviews.

It was necessary to ask subsidiary questions during the interview to clarify points being made by the respondent; however, care was taken to ensure that the interviewer interjected in as neutral a way as possible to reduce the prospect of "reactive bias" (Palys, p. 166). Also, subsequent to questions, respondents talked about other points which occurred to them.

Also, since a tape recorder was used for recording all interviews, the danger of giving clues by writing notes was avoided. However, the use of tape recorders carried the danger that "the permanence and unforgiving accuracy of tape may inhibit candour" (Palys, p. 166).

Another approach was to ensure that the findings of the study were based on as many sources of data as possible. According to Guba, "if objectivity can never be entirely attained, relying on many different sources makes it less likely that distorted interpretations will be made" (1990, p. 21). Thus data were gathered from many different stakeholders, and from document and statistical sources. This was a form of elaborated triangulation (Guba, 1990, p. 21).

In their work on methodology, Hall and MacManus (1982) indicated that a decentralized approach to monitoring based on the notion that actors closest to the practice are in the best position to know, tap, and interpret developments at the local level was likely to be most effective. This implied that respondents should be selected carefully based on how close they were to the policy and its implementation; the sampling methods adopted allowed this objective to be accomplished.

Respondents were selected using two non-probabilistic techniques: purposive and snowball sampling (Palys, 1992, p. 148). For purposive sampling, it was necessary to approach people who were known to be members of the various stakeholder groups, including: aboriginal students; potential aboriginal students; university administrators, faculty members, and service providers; and government officials. Interviews resulting from purposive sampling enabled snowball sampling to take place. Respondents indicated others in the same or different groups who had something to add to the study; for example, the snowballing technique led to an aboriginal Australian student on an exchange visit at the university becoming one of the respondents. This was particularly useful since one of the policy objectives being studied related to such exchange visits by aboriginal students from different countries.

Since in-depth interviews with open ended questions were used, the sample size for each group was quite small to keep the study manageable; even when extensive summarization had been completed, the data collected from the nineteen participants formed an extensive part of the study. This limitation meant that although every stakeholder group was represented among the respondents, it was not possible to include respondents from every program of studies, year of program, department, or role in the university's administration. However, the respondents included in the study were able to give views covering a wide range of the topic.

The Study Framework in Practice

Appendix 2 gives an overview of the research framework in practice. This shows the policy formation period, which did not form part of the study, and the policy implementation period which was the main focus. The appendix indicates that the study was a "snapshot" of the state of policy implementation, in the view of respondents, taken over the data collection period.

Data Collection

Data collection commenced in September 1992 with an initial set of four interviews with university and government administrators. Interviews with the other respondents were continued through 1993, with a final follow-up interview taking place in May 1995.

Interviews were held at a location chosen by each respondent. In some cases it was the respondent's office; several interviews were conducted in the student lounge; in one case the respondent chose to meet at the researcher's office. A tape recorder was used to record all interviews from the point of explaining the ethical considerations and the voluntary nature of the interview up to the final conclusion. In all cases, except one where the respondent indicated that he did not need to see the transcript, transcripts of the interviews were provided to respondents. They were then asked whether they wanted to meet again, discuss the transcript by telephone or submit written amendments and additions.

Responses varied. In some cases respondents simply indicated that the transcripts were an accurate reflection of what was said during the interviews and that the data should stand as written, while in other cases respondents provided written amendments either on the original transcript or on another document or provided comments at a follow-up meeting. In one case, the tape recorder did not record the respondent's voice clearly enough, and the interview had to be carried out again. In another case the interview was interrupted and had to be continued on the following day.

The transcription process seemed to work well, and provided a good basis for respondents to follow up and comment further, although it was very time consuming in a study with nineteen respondents.

Distillation

The term "distillation" is used to convey the idea that, although the data were summarized during the process, the "essence" was retained in the final version. The first stage in distilling the data was to complete summaries of each transcript. In order to reduce repetition and to render the section more readable, the question and answer format of the interviews was removed. However, the basic chronological structure of each interview was retained as were indications as to whether respondents were responding directly to questions or whether they were offering views which occurred to them during the interview process.

In the decision-theoretic policy review method the interview technique had the potential to make explicit latent goals and objectives. Such points became clear during the distillation process. Also, since the ordering of the points made by respondents was significant (Palys, 1992, p. 173), this ordering system was retained in the summary stage in Chapter Four.

The summaries produced in the initial distillation process reduced the interview transcripts by approximately one half. During the distillation process, the aim was to retain, as far as possible, the flavour and words used in the interview, while reducing the volume to a manageable level.

During the summary process, names of people and places were removed to obscure the location of the study, and to render the respondent unidentifiable.

The next stages of distillation were to bring together individual comments as they related to the policy objectives (Chapter Five) and to the expressed and unexpressed goals (Chapter Six). Chapter Six also considered points made in the literature in relation to the topic.

Verification of Data

Data verification was addressed by having respondents read and approve the final transcript of their interview. Thus, the final transcript was considered the respondent's document to adjust and change as he or she saw fit. Accuracy and logical validity of the summary process were addressed by careful scrutiny of the transcript, the use of word processing software to identify key words to help ensure completeness of data transfer, and by third party checking from transcript to individual summaries (Chapter Four) and composite summaries (Chapters Five and Six).

Quality of the Study

The concepts of reliability and validity speak to the quality of study findings in general. According to Palys (1992),

> reliability is generally synonymous with consistency, whether of the same phenomenon over time or of judgments regarding the same phenomenon across different observers. (p. 70)

Reliability was addressed in the study by the triangulation technique in which several views of the same phenomena were obtained. A tape recorder was used, which avoided possible inaccuracy in note taking. Also, all respondents checked and reviewed full transcripts of their interviews. Following this review, follow-up interviews were conducted in which respondents verified and commented on what they had said. As part of the verification, external reviewers checked all the original transcripts against interview summaries and findings to help ensure that transfer and distillation from transcripts was accurate and complete.

While reliability was addressed in the research methodology, validity was more difficult to establish in a study which was largely qualitative. Palys (1992) regarded validity to be a second hurdle in considering the trustworthiness of findings.

> If a measure fails at the reliability hurdle, then there is no use going any farther since, in most cases, it can't be valid. If, however the measure is shown to be reliable, its validity is still an open question. (p. 71)

As an example, he went on to point out that, while shoe size is relatively stable in adults and can be assessed or measured consistently by different observers, it is nonetheless probably invalid as a "test of intelligence or creativity" (p. 71).

On the same topic, Smith and Glass (1987) pointed out that

> because of their idiosyncrasies, applying uniform standards to naturalistic studies is inappropriate. Nevertheless studies do vary in quality. Here are some, if not standards, at least issues to be raised about the qualities of naturalistic studies. (p. 278)

The authors went on to list the following issues: time spent collecting data, access to data, "naturalness" of the data, researcher self-criticism, logical validity, confirmation descriptive adequacy, and significance (p. 278). It was decided to consider the study in terms of these issues rather than to attempt using the concept of validity to assess the overall study quality.

Time spent collecting data

Data were collected over a two year time period and from a relatively large sample of 19 respondents. Data were collected from a variety of sources.

Access to Data

The relationships formed with respondents and the open nature of the review process led to good access to data. In a few cases respondents wished to remove certain comments from the transcript or did not wish certain comments to be recorded. The respondents' wishes were complied with in these cases. Respondents seemed interested in the study and in every case went to considerable pains in making thoughtful and useful comments on the subject matter. There was no indication from respondents that the research or the researcher were not welcome.

"Naturalness" of the Data

Smith and Glass pointed out that the study should portray the case in its natural state "without the reactivity and artificiality that can be introduced by the researcher" (p. 278). The study contained summaries of the original transcripts. The summaries reduced the volume of words by a great extent, but retained the flavour of the transcripts both in the direct quotations and in the narrative portions. The data were further summarized in relation to the policy document, but the summaries remained as "natural" as possible while rendering the data accessible to the reader.

Researcher Self-criticism

The study acknowledged that preconceptions and biases can influence the data both in collection and analysis. These problems were addressed in the study design. However, it was concluded that it is not possible to avoid such problems completely and that there are limits to the reliability and validity of the study.

Logical Validity

The study was constructed in an attempt to ensure that findings were connected in a reasoned way with the descriptive data and to ensure that descriptive data were connected logically to data sources.

Confirmation

Attempts were made in the study to check views and findings from a variety of sources, and to ensure that the summary processes were logical and complete.

Descriptive Adequacy

Detailed summaries of the data were used to help ensure that the reader gained insight into the respondent comments and to the way in which the comments were made. These were lengthy, but were retained since they provide the reader with a flavour as well as with the substance of the data.

Significance

The study addressed an important question and was designed in such a way that the questions could be addressed.

The analysis of reliability and study quality suggested that the study was designed, constructed, and carried out so as to provide findings which were reliable and that the study itself was of good quality.

Ethics Guidelines

Issues such as informed consent, avoidance of deception and deceit, freedom of respondents to choose whether to participate, a clear and fair agreement between researcher and respondent, ensuring a positive experience for respondents, and protection of confidentiality were adhered to during the study (Palys, 1992, p. 90-105).

Respondents were informed of the nature and scope of the study before each interview appointment was made. At the commencement of the interview each respondent was again informed of the scope and purpose, was reminded that participation was voluntary, and that he/she could withdraw from the study at any time. Respondents were informed that names would not be used, and that recording tapes would be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. However, participants were also informed that their general status or position would be described, and that although the university would not be named in the study, it might be possible for interested readers to identify the province and the university from the information provided.

Respondents were reminded that they would receive a full transcript of the interview(s) and that they could amend or delete any comments they felt were inaccurate or which might be harmful to them or to others. Participants exercised this right during the process, and in one case, at the participant's request, additional information on a sensitive issue was given but not recorded. Such information was not included in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Interview Summaries

This chapter contains summaries condensed from the transcripts of interviews with the 19 respondents. To assist the reader, Appendix 3 provides a brief description of each participant.

Rhonda

Rhonda was an aboriginal student of fine arts. She opened the interview by saying that she was familiar with the university's policy document on aboriginal student access and academic persistence.

Rhonda said:

> my understanding is that there is a quota system now where a certain percentage of students in a faculty has to be aboriginal students. I'm not really sure of this, but dentistry and nursing are the only faculties that have ever met the quota. In all other faculties the quota system doesn't have an effect because most faculties can't fill the quota anyhow.

She went on to say that, as well as the quota system, there was the Transition Year Program (TYP) to facilitate aboriginal student entry into the university and the Ambassador Program which employed aboriginal students to promote the university within Native communities.

Rhonda thought that the Ambassador Program was fairly successful.

> The students who are on our Ambassador Program go around to the surrounding schools within [the city] and the reserves around the province and they go as far down as [location] and north of [the city] where they promote the university and aboriginal life here on campus.

She said that the Ambassador Program students, who were generally in their first or second years, were paid seven or eight dollars an hour. She felt that the scheme worked quite well because "What the students are seeing are their own people who are successful."

Rhonda was not very familiar with the School of Native Studies and explained that it was not specifically geared towards aboriginal people. It was geared towards those interested in aboriginal studies and the student body included both white and aboriginal people.

Rhonda mentioned that one of the other goals of the university's policy was to enrich all aspects of the intellectual and cultural life of the university through increased participation of aboriginal students, and she said that this aspect was improving. As an example, she highlighted the Aboriginal Student Council (ASC) which tried to promote a community feeling for aboriginal students on campus. The council operated the Native student lounge as a common place for Native people on campus to gather.

The office of Native Student Services was also available for the aboriginal population. Rhonda felt that aboriginals were a distinct group and had distinct needs. As a group, aboriginal students had made demands on the office of Native Student Services to meet their specific needs, and she felt that the university was now working towards meeting these needs.

Rhonda indicated that she was President of the Aboriginal Student Council but that her term of office finished the day following the interview. She felt that the presidency had given her a lot of strength and had helped her to develop in various ways.

> It helped me to understand my community more here, and it helped me to respect a lot of people in my community. It taught me a lot of responsibility towards the students, the council, and the elders and to the community, and it was a good learning experience.

Rhonda went on to say that

> as President you're an advocate for the students. You're the voice for the students, so when the students have a problem and need to

> discuss something you go, and you speak for the students. First you get the students' mandate, and you go and speak for them. You represent them, you fund raise for our association. We put on a four day event in early March where we have Native awareness days, so a lot is centred around that.

She said the work for the society was time-consuming and took her four to five hours each day to complete.

With regard to the issue surrounding the appointment of the acting Director of Native studies to Director, Rhonda said that the ASC had been involved in some controversy. She said

> the students came to me and asked me to approach Dean [name] and ask that we should have a more active part in the selection process. We sent letters from our community to our elders and the associations around asking that they support our belief that the Director of Native Student Services should be of aboriginal ancestry. The "open doors" policy hadn't been in effect, and we felt that the university was not giving some of our own people a chance and the Dean of Student Services pushed through the selection process within about a month. It was at a time when we were really busy and in the end only one candidate who was selected for the interviews was aboriginal, and we felt that perhaps better choices should have been made. Then, as aboriginal students, we believe that the people who are in that office should have an understanding of aboriginal ways and put those ways into practice because we do, and it's hard to be an advocate when you don't understand why students will do things by their inner time clock - not by the time clock that the other society out there follows, but we as aboriginal people follow our inner time clock first. There are a lot of issues here on campus with the Native students that weren't being addressed and the students said that it was time we stood up and told them what our issues were and what we needed from the director, and why we felt that someone with aboriginal ancestry would have been much better for the position.

Rhonda said that, at first, there was a lot of resentment on both sides but she had spent a lot of time during summer working with the new director, especially with the selection of the Native Student Officer. The ASC had demanded that the person who was dealing on a daily basis with the faculty students should be a Native person, and she had worked for about three months as part of the selection process. Rhonda pointed out that TYP already had an advisor of aboriginal ancestry.

Rhonda said that an elder from the Native community was brought in to help with the selection because

> our elders were able to be around people and know whether their hearts are there, and it was really important that the person chosen for [name]'s position was an advocate for the students. They really needed that. They needed someone who, when you're running to class and doing this and that, was doing the phone calls for you, or other leg work. They needed someone like that, like their own cheer leader who was pushing them along the way.

On the subject of prejudice against aboriginal students in different faculties Rhonda brought up the question of entry requirements. "In my faculty, to enter your first year, you have to have French or another second language."

Rhonda's department was fine arts and she indicated that most of the aboriginal students were presently relearning their traditional language. She maintained that most of the aboriginal students were not in favour of learning French because "It's just learning the language of our other oppressors."

Rhonda explained that even if Native languages were acceptable by the university as a second language for entrance purposes, Native students who spoke their traditional language had to write an exam, "written in European manner." Therefore, according to Rhonda, most of the students failed the exam even though they were fluent in their traditional language.

> If I had to go in right now and write an English equivalent exam, I'm sure I'd fail because of the grammatical content of the language; for example, there is no present participle in our language. I was asked by the Chair of my faculty why more Native people weren't applying and I said they needed that second language.

Rhonda said that she did not know why there was a second language entrance requirement but supposed that historically there had always been the need for a certain level of proficiency. This had usually been demonstrated by credit in high school grade twelve French. Rhonda felt that requiring aboriginal students to demonstrate writing skills in aboriginal languages which had a mainly oral tradition was unfair and discriminatory.

She also mentioned that although she had entered the university on merit, "I was asked once if I was one of the quota students." A professor had asked this during class when Rhonda was working in her studio space, but she said she "didn't get mad at the time." Rhonda went on to say that her work had been called primitive and naive, and she had been told by instructors to get over her culture and to assimilate. "That was the past and now you are in the present."

Rhonda said that she was working on wood sculptures, and that they were a mixture of totem and architecture. She explained that there was no literal carving in her work; there was carving but, it "couldn't be read directly." She worked on large totemic pieces; the average size was about nine feet.

Rhonda said that other students would sometimes mention that since she got her education paid for she shouldn't complain about issues on the program. However, Rhonda pointed out that being funded meant that she did not qualify for art scholarships while the other students did. Also, Rhonda felt that the funding conferred an additional obligation on her which, perhaps did not apply so much to the non-aboriginal students. "Yes I do get my education paid for but they don't know that I'm also giving back to my community but I don't feel that I have to explain that to them."

Rhonda commented again on the fact that her art work had been called primitive and naive. She felt that this kind of comment would have been more appropriate in a junior level art course which is usually more prescriptive of the type of work to be done. "I withdrew from that part of the program after that. I had finished the course and decided I was better in sculpture anyhow."

Rhonda was talking about prejudice in faculties and commented on the difference for her between last year and this. If she experienced prejudicial behaviour this year, she felt she could go to one of the advocates in Native Student Services for help.

Expanding on the theme of prejudice, Rhonda didn't know the individuals involved, but had heard that aboriginal students did leave the university because of this problem. She presumed that such students considered it was "just not worth their effort in trying to fit in and assimilate." She also knew of Native students who would have to take a year off to go and be with their families, although this was often for personal reasons and not necessarily because of prejudice.

On a different topic, Rhonda said that there were between 400 and 500 Native students at the university and that about 100 of these students dropped into the Native student lounge on a regular basis. She pointed out that there was room for between 20 to 30 people in the student lounge, and that the centre was usually full. It was Rhonda's feeling that about 200 of the 500 students would "come by" at some point.

> The centre was a place to come to be with your own people, to joke and laugh in the way that we do and to discuss things, and it's a place to be where you don't feel so - like I grew up in the city here, but I've always been around Native people so when I first came here I walked down [campus location]; I was just on my own among a lot of white people. I was just totally overwhelmed and it was really hard on me, and when I came here I knew I always had a place where I could be when I had to be so stressed out.

Rhonda further said that some of the students in the centre would discuss biology or medicine; therefore, the lounge was fulfilling academic as well as cultural needs.

Rhonda thought that the most important and useful of the various measures introduced to increase aboriginal participation and academic persistence at the university was Native Student Services because it had set up TYP, and now it was dealing with and supporting all aboriginal students, including those entering faculties directly.

Rhonda felt strongly that the university needed an integrated Native student centre. She indicated that the Native student lounge was sometimes referred to as a Native student centre, but she felt that such a centre should be

> a building where the Aboriginal law faculty, the medical students, School of Native Studies, the Aboriginal Student Council and Native Student Services are all together.

Rhonda thought the fact that the School of Native Studies was located off the main part of the campus indicated that the university considered Native issues a low priority. However, Rhonda felt that the situation was improving. She knew that sub-committees on aboriginal rights and policies had been set up involving both administration and aboriginal representatives. Rhonda felt that these initiatives had been useful, but reiterated the need for an integrated centre in one building. She pointed out that all the sciences were together, so a Native student centre should be a possibility.

On a different topic, Rhonda thought that the dropout rate was lower now among aboriginal students. Also, she felt that more Native students were entering the university both through TYP and directly to faculties.

> This makes a difference in our lives, in our quality of life. Every time one of our students succeeds, that's one more student that beat the system, that beat the abuse, that beat the alcohol, that beat the entire system that was set up to keep them at a lower level, and they said that Natives weren't supposed to be educated, weren't supposed to be in university and we've got 400 to 500 here, so every time that there's a success it shows in our communities, shows our younger people that you can do it. It shows the ones here that, you know, when things are tough just keep going at it. It builds our strength as Native people.

Rhonda felt that a lot of the students wanted to go back and help their communities. For example, she knew a girl in Calgary who was doing her master's degree in Environmental Design and Urban Planning. She planned to return to her reserve and apply her skills there. She had spoken to aboriginal engineering students who wanted to help avoid the destruction of the land, and she knew of aboriginal civil engineers who wanted to help build up the reserves.

On job prospects, Rhonda said:

> yes, in order to be in this world, even if you are non-Native, you need a degree. That's the way things are, and even now a general arts and science degree does not get you a job so it's basically giving us a chance, like the individual, to build up a lot of self esteem.

Rhonda thought that there had been improvements over the last number of years in student participation. There were more students, and she felt that they were more of a "presence" around campus. Rhonda thought that the aboriginal presence would be enhanced by all Native students being located in one centre, and she felt that aboriginals needed still more recognition by the university.

> They look at us as a multicultural group, almost like we're into this bead work or something. They don't see us as a governing body. We are a governing body here on campus. Outside the university, the Native community looks at the Aboriginal Student Council and the students there on campus as if they were children and they were held up very high by the community. The university should see that a lot of their money is coming from us -not coming from government, and they were not recognizing that; they're not recognizing our voice or our distinctiveness or that we have needs here that need to be met. Last year we raised our voice, and I think they heard it a bit and as time goes on I think they're going to have to hear it a bit more.

Rhonda said that it was only recently that the ASC had begun to "take a stand." Where this resulted in conflict with the university, it was perhaps necessary as a way of showing that aboriginals were at the university to stay. She felt that it was a commonly held view

> that the Indian problem will go away. We are not a problem and we are not going to go away, so we need that recognition and we're not getting it, and our needs are not being met here in some respects. I think that to improve that it just needs a little bit of give on their side. I mean we are more than willing. We've resolved any issues we may have had with Native Student Services right away and we've more than decided that we have to work with the university, so we're giving on our part, but it's whether or not they're giving on theirs.

According to Rhonda, the biggest single problem that faces a Native student in this university is assimilation.

> Being forced to sit in classes where your culture is being treated as a token, being forced to learn about your culture in a third person way. Tolerance of all that is very hard. Getting in is no problem because our students are getting better at high schools and they are completing their high school. It's once you're in and having to face a very non-Native environment and the university is a very European, Christian, male kind of mentality, and to face that and maintain your traditional cultural values is very hard.

With regard to people making comments about Natives, Rhonda thought there should be a greater Native awareness at the university. She thought it was time that the university "sat down" with the native population, not just with university students, but with representatives of all the post-secondary students in the city. The possibility of such a meeting or forum had been broached with the university administration. She pointed out that since the beginning of the previous year the Aboriginal Students' Council (ASC) had been trying to get the university's President to acknowledge the need for such a forum. So far he had not done so.

On a related topic, Rhonda indicated that the ASC had been invited to speak at a meeting on multiculturalism. According to Rhonda, the council had accepted with reservations. The sentiment had been

> "we're not a multicultural group but we'll come and tell you that." You know like "thank you for inviting us but we are not a multicultural group. We are a distinct minority, like handicapped people, like women, you know we are a distinct minority."

Rhonda said that aboriginals were seen as a marginalized society. Handicapped people had also been seen in the same way for a long time - "as non contributing members of society." According to Rhonda, aboriginals were

> making our steps, making our waves, and now they're starting to have to deal with it and they don't know how and I think that's the problem. They don't know - I think last year the questions were asked "where did all this come from?" like "where did all these Indians come from?" and it's like "we've been here a while."

Rhonda thought that aboriginal people had a positive view of the measures being taken by the university, and that this was encouraging them to apply.

> Yes, they are trying to help, and there are a number of measures in place, therefore "I'll go to that university."

She continued to say

> I think the more we show that we are there for the students and we are working together as one body, the more it entices other Native people here.

Rhonda thought that within the next five years aboriginals would be able to take "their place" around the campus. She thought there would be maybe three times as many Native students on campus by that time.

In conclusion, Rhonda said that

> We were told we never could be educated. Most of our parents come from residential schools where they were told they were stupid and had to completely turn their lives around into a world that was foreign to them, so the fact that we are here in the university, in a small city of 30,000 people - yes we are showing them it can be done, and we are setting a path for the next people and once we have achieved that, I mean we all have other things in our lives that come with us and a lot of it is a lot of struggle and a lot of pain in our community, but we are still here, and we are still doing our job here and we need for people to recognize that. Yes we have alcoholism and abuse in our communities, but we are still here and we are still trying to make a better place for our elders and our young. If people just tried to understand that and to look at what we are doing maybe their attitudes about what exactly Native people are all about would be changed.

She said that it was easy to write it down and say that this was our goal but to put those goals into practice took a lot of work on the students' part and on the university's part and at times "as students we haven't met up to that policy, but I know there's a lot of times the university hasn't fulfilled the policy either."

Quincey

At the time of the interview, Quincey was a University and College Entrance Program (UCEP) student. He identified both the Transition Year Program (TYP), at the university, and the UCEP, at the vocational college, as programs designed to open up more university places to aboriginal students. He thought

> the goals and objectives are to increase the numbers of Native people going back to school and the objective is, I believe, for self government one day and that somewhere they're looking to

> educate more Native people so that Native people gain some pride again and confidence and make up for the past, the way things were and basically eventually for self government we're going to need educated Native people.

Discussing the TYP in particular, he said

> the way I see it, the TYP tries to have the student get acclimatized into the university system, to help them to be comfortable. There are goals for that but also by the same token they increase the pride of the Native coming to school so they aren't ashamed of being where they are and also help to build their self confidence in dealing with the university mainstream.

He felt that the UCEP, offered as preparation for university, was on the same lines as the TYP. He felt a lot of special provisions were needed for Native people.

> Like the UCEP. If you had a lot of these Native people going back to school, say in academic upgrading alone, at least 200-250 in the first two weeks would be out. They'd be quitting and maybe 60 % I believe, would be gone in the first couple of months, so I think we should take it a little bit slower for a person to get used to coming to school again.

Commenting on how successful he thought the UCEP was in increasing enrollment of Native students in university and in other post-secondary institutions, Quincey said:

> I think they are a lot more successful now than they were back say 20 years ago. I think that a positive step, like what I mean is that 20 years from now the enrollment for aboriginal students in school on a regular basis is going to be 10 times what it is now. That's a positive measure, at least it shows an increase instead of decrease.

Quincey felt that another generation of Natives would see an increase in the enrollment for post-secondary education. Although unaware of actual statistics, Quincey had the impression that more aboriginal people were attending university, just as more were attending university and college preparation programs such as the UCEP.

> This UCEP is something that I never really heard about until the last two years, and I believe it's on the increase.

Quincey commented on aboriginal academic persistence rates compared with those of other students and said:

> it depends. I think a lot of the white students - I mean people get offended, they get upset because special consideration is taken you know for a Native student and the regular student who could be Irish, Scottish whatever, they have to work to get where they're at. They get, they get upset because they feel they're getting the short end of the stick somewhere and they feel cheated, and that does cause problems. People I've known have had their problems.

Commenting on the aboriginal student pass rate and academic persistence, Quincey felt that there was more equality in persistence rates now between aboriginal and other students, and that this was partly due to programs such as the TYP and the UCEP.

> There's more equality, and there's more care taken in the education here in steps taken to educate the Native people than, say, the ordinary academic upgrading, and it should be that way too because a lot of these students here haven't been to school for ten or fifteen years, and it seems like more care is taken here, more attention is paid. It seems the TYP is also along the same line, it is doing the same thing. It's basically like nurturing the student in the first year.

Quincey then considered which of the measures designed to increase enrollment and persistence among Native students was the most effective. He compared the UCEP, the TYP, and faculty seats set aside for aboriginal students.

> I'd say the UCEP would be because it's with going back to school. Having seats available is one thing but having people complaining about those seats is another thing. I think the concept of the UCEP is a lot better than say the TYP. The TYP's good too. I think they measure the same thing in the TYP, but basically you know you have to walk before you can run again and it's the same thing, you have to start from the basic and build yourself up and that right there is your confidence level. If you don't have the foundation when you go through elementary, high school or junior high you have to retrain yourself to have that foundation.

Quincey then considered what could be done to make the implementation of the policy for aboriginal access and persistence more effective.

> Having things a little bit more stable when it comes to funding and how they run things like that in an administration type way. They make cuts here, they make cuts there and I think if it was more stable when it came to say having a set plan and being able to stick with the plan - it's like when you open a business, if you open a restaurant you expect to make a profit in the first day and it takes three or four years sometimes. You don't expect to make a big profit, you expect to break even after the first year. It's the same thing with schooling. You can't expect to have instant results the first two or three years; you have to wait and see what happens after that, you know, and I think if you could do it along those lines with the way they spend the money, as long as they get the results, even if they get 20% of the students turning out something that's worth it. I don't think they should make these cutbacks and have a reshuffle just to save money.

Quincey spoke about his experiences with funding agencies.

> Basically a lot of agencies are passing it around with all the cuts going on. There's different types of funding up there but you always get shuffled around, that's the one thing, it's unstable. You always get passed off to somebody else, and then they take you eventually. They give you a lot of hassle, and you always have problems trying to find out where your funding, your pay check is coming from and you feel like a second class citizen because you have to beg for your money sometimes just to get the money. That's the hardest part of coming to school accepting the way you're treated with the money, the funding situation. That's why I'm not going back. I had a student loan for $2 000 and I haven't paid them back. It's three years now, I should have paid them back but I didn't. The point is I've also applied for my treaty status in February last year and I still haven't heard back from them and I mentioned to the student finance board that I'd applied for my treaty status so the student finance board have passed me off. They're saying wait until you've heard from Indian Affairs first, get that, get your funding sorted out first and then get back to us and in the meantime to make us feel better, pay us back the money and show us you have some standing and we'll look at you after that - it's two options but I was getting the run around.

Quincey went on to explain

> Well I'll have to pay it back eventually, that's given, but all it does is just push me back. Like I started asking these questions back in January and I found out in March that I wasn't getting the funding for the coming year, all it does is push me back a year and

> sets me back and now I go to work and I've got to see if I get back to school.

The conversation then moved on to the difference which Quincey thought increased access had made to aboriginal students.

> There's a lot more students looking at school, positive rather than negative now. You know a lot of students just go to school just to get out of the reserve. I think having it available now is opening up opportunities and it's creating new thinking on reserves. It's creating - like the self governing concept - a lot of people have different ideas on that but what it is it's creating a lot of ideas - it's opening minds. It's making us more mainstream. We don't feel like we're second class citizens in our own country."

Quincey thought that the measures discussed had helped with student participation and success at the post-secondary level.

> I believe that it has. I believe the more positive role models that Natives, aboriginals, can see in their own community, the more visible, the more they become encouraged, rather than seeing the stereotypes on the streets, the drunken uncle, the drunken guy in the street, the drop out from school who parties all the time and works for six months and quits his job - you know whatever happens, if you have more visible presence of aboriginal people, it's a positive thing, like the more you have of something good. It's going to get better and that's it. If it's negative it gets negative, and if it's good it gets good.

Quincey felt that the more visible the role model group was and the more positive it was, the more aboriginal people would be encouraged to participate in post-secondary education. He concluded by saying:

> hopefully it will create a snowball effect. You have all these Native kids coming up and seeing another way, another type of lifestyle rather than seeing - they'll see a person who doesn't need a drink to get by; they'll see a person who thinks education's a great thing, they'll see a Native with a car, a nice house and a lifestyle they're really happy with and it will give them something to look at saying "well I want that too," it will give them something to - I think it's more of that - it's a more positive - it's great.

Noreen

Noreen was a UCEP student at the time of the interview and was aiming to enter university to study science. The interview was somewhat curtailed as Noreen had to leave for class.

Noreen began by talking about the measures taken to improve aboriginal participation at the university.

> Well the measures are programs like TYP and UCEP and the available seats in the different faculties at the university. Another measure is the advertisement of it; people are starting to know about it. I learned about UCEP through the Native publication picked up at the Metis Nation office and without that I would never have known about it. So advertisements through newspapers are the only way people are going to find out that these programs even exist.

Noreen then said what she thought were the goals and objectives of each measure

> Well I guess that the goals are that there are not many Native students completing the formal education process. You know the statistics are really low. I know for medical doctors there's only 26 in North America. That's obscene.

Noreen felt that the numbers were really low and wondered if the measures she had mentioned would be successful in increasing the number of aboriginal medical doctors.

> I don't know that they will be unless they incorporate cultural aspects along with it, because you know medicine men versus doctors, I think there has to be tolerance you know and understanding from the faculties that if they are going to get Native people in there they can't ridicule their beliefs, the same as all the faculties.

She felt that one of the goals was to educate faculties and faculty members into aspects of Native culture

> I'd say it would educate the faculties and that's what's so good about UCEP, the cultural aspect is included and even for urban people and people who don't even know where they come from it instills a little bit of pride and that's needed desperately.

Noreen then commented on the goals of the UCEP. "Well it's called the University College Entrance Program, so I assume the goal is to get aboriginals into universities and colleges." She thought the thing most important about the TYP was that

> the TYP is adding the cultural aspect and making the aboriginal students feel more comfortable in that atmosphere because it's scary going to university and you can touch base with TYP. I'm not going to TYP myself, but I'm hoping that it will be a lifeline if I get lost in the University then I can go to TYP and say "how?"

Noreen went on to say that she hoped to enter the Faculty of Science at the university and had been told by the director of Native Student Services that it would be possible. On the question of access, Noreen thought that programs such as the TYP, which allowed Native students to ease slowly into their first year at university, were very successful, but also on the question of access to the TYP she stressed that acceptance should not be subject to discrimination on the basis of "how Native somebody is." As she put it:

> the thing about the access - you know, that brings in the question of blood total, blood count or something. You know there should be strict rules that are put down and followed, not who you know or which band you're from or whether you're just a Metis; there should be no discrimination.

Peter

At the time of the interview, Peter was a University and College Entrance Program (UCEP) student at the nearby vocational college. He began the interview by talking about the university's Transition Year Program (TYP).

> I have noticed that there is a program at the [university] called the TYP that has made acceptance into university a lot easier. Also, I noticed that for aboriginal students in Canada there was a drop in requirement level for Native students to get into the universities.

Peter went on to explain that he did not like the TYP because it made Native students compete with other Native students for places at university. He felt that in an ideal world, the academic qualifications of Native students should be as high as those of other students, which would render programs such as the TYP unnecessary. Peter said he realized that the goals of the TYP were to provide academic and other support for Native students to allow them to participate in the life of the university and not feel completely alone and unsupported.

Speculating on the organization of the TYP, Peter felt that it would be useful if the program encouraged students to help each other, otherwise it would be necessary to hire tutors.

> It depends who is providing the services. If it's one of the stronger students who is helping the weaker students then I would agree with that but if they're paying for a tutor to come in and instruct a whole bunch of Native students I would agree with that paying from the funds.

Peter then commented on faculty reserved seats for Native students, saying:

> yes, well the reserved seats I understand are concerned with educating Native people and presumably it's right to hold seats - for Native people to get more involved with the education process. I like the form of what they're doing, reserving the seats for Native students.

However, Peter indicated that he would prefer a situation where Native students could compete with students of other nationalities for regular places on equal terms. He was somewhat unhappy with the current situation where aboriginal students competed with each other for set-aside seats.

> You know it's basically kind of belittling Native people. That's how I feel.

About the UCEP Peter said that

> the goals and objectives of the UCEP are to guide the students along to meet the requirements that are handed out to them from the universities, to prepare the students for entering university level.

Peter, commenting about how the UCEP worked to achieve its objectives, said:

> I found it very frustrating when I first started the UCEP here. What I found very frustrating was that there wasn't much patience in there, between the students and the instructors. I found there wasn't that much patience at the beginning, but as the year ended I noticed the instructors having more patience and the students basically pushing themselves.

Peter explained this by saying that at the beginning of the program it had been "kind of like 'come on hurry up'" but that at the end "the instructors let us know that they were there for us if we needed them."

Peter also felt that including aboriginal cultural content in programs was important. He indicated that this was an important factor in the UCEP's success.

> The UCEP for Native students would also get them to talk about their Native history and their Native culture. You know, we would have our round dances and our sweetgrass ceremonies; it keeps them in touch with their culture and, them being who they are, it gives them strength.

Asked about the relative strengths of the UCEP and the TYP Peter said

> I have to say with UCEP that the time that we had here was pretty rushed and go go go. I forget most of my stuff already. I had 34 % in my math final, and I just lost most of my skills in math. I remember doing some homework three weeks before the exam in that section in math, and I can't even remember the formula. You know that's how fast they were pushing us. Two days to work on the formula and that's it. It comes up in a math exam and I can't remember it. Those were easy points too. I have to say with the program that it's the time, it's nine months - it was too rushed, too compact.

Although Peter had not been through the TYP he had heard comments from students who had completed or were currently completing it.

> I think with the TYP, you know, I get this feeling that if I went through TYP I'd go through with it, and I'd walk around into the other faculties, and I'd get the feeling that the other students are going to look down on me you know and say "He got in there with a six or a seven, and I have to make an eight or an eight point five to continue with my studies here," and I don't know - looking at it that way.

Peter was concerned that the TYP would make Native students feel that they were being given special treatment compared to other students. He was also unsure whether completion would lead to a faculty place.

> I don't even know that it will get them a place. It will get some people a place but not the majority of the students that they want.

Commenting on the numbers of aboriginal students presently at the university compared with past years, Peter said:

> I know it jumped up quite a bit compared to 20 years ago. The seats aren't being filled - that's all I know - that the seats aren't being filled with Native students, and if the seats aren't being filled with them they go out to other students. That's the disappointment that I see.

On academic persistence among Aboriginal students, Peter commented

> I've known people who actually went to college and completed that but with college and university I think the drop out rate is really high. People I know who drop out have a lot of living problems and a lot of social problems. They can't seem to just separate their problems from home and at school. I had that problem in UCEP here; from September to December I was doing well but not really good and I got involved with a relationship, so I moved in January and I live with my old girlfriend again and next thing I know my marks drop by 20 %, and what I'm trying to say is that our lives away from school obstruct our studies.

Peter felt that the UCEP was very successful for Native people.

> I'd like to see a building here in [city] that offers a UCEP because I hear there's a UCEP here at [vocational college] and at [college]. You know I'd like to see this available for Native students. Then you could have your services together, your support

> systems there for one another instead of being scattered throughout the city.

Peter felt that to improve the program it was necessary to improve the grants and give more help for students with families. Peter offered some final comments on the TYP, and indicated that he would not want to enter the university via that program.

> They tried the TYP in [university], from what I was told, and over there it failed. They brought it up to [this university], and so far it's a success right now in [this city]. I guess it's through traveling there in [city] that is the reason why it's improving here at the [university]. It's a good program TYP you know, it's just my own biased opinion that I wouldn't take it because I think the services aren't good there.

Peter concluded by saying that he preferred the UCEP because

> I think it encourages other Native students to participate at the university, especially when it's someone you know or a friend that's an average guy and that that person can do it, so can the next person.

James

James was a student on the UCEP at the time of the interview. He named the UCEP and the TYP as two measures taken to improve Native participation at the university. Speaking first about the UCEP, James said he thought it was "to bring Native people onto the same academic level as any other race and to ensure that they have a place in society."

Going on to comment on the TYP James said

> I think the goals of the TYP were like you know just cutting red tape for Native people. There are you know a lot of Native people out there that don't really care for education because - on the grounds that they would sooner be traditionalists than to be considered assimilated so to speak. This cuts a lot of red tape instead of them going to three years of high school you know taking three years of high school is really hard. This cuts a lot of slack so to speak.

James said that he thought the TYP was a kind of introduction into university programs to make students aware of and help them overcome the challenges they would be facing. He went on to say

> well I think you know it's up to the individuals. They're the ones that want to succeed; they've got to be there and they have to work and the TYP is there if you want to use it. They seem to work closer with the students, and when I went there for an interview they said that if I had any problems personal or whatever, that I could definitely go and talk with them.

James said that this support was not open to other students at the university.

James felt that by making the UCEP all Native a lot of barriers were cut down. He also said "Well the staff, you know, obviously they aren't prejudiced I think, otherwise they wouldn't be teaching a Native class and generally I get along with all the staff, and I can talk to them."

Asked to comment on the usefulness of the UCEP and the TYP in improving persistence, James said "I would say at least 70% of the students do go on to get some sort of certificate or degree" this was partly because

> well UCEP, you know, they help you reach your goals, and there's a lot of encouragement, and it's their persistence that works you know from the staff, and the students help you out as well.

James felt that most Native students who went through the University took some form of social studies program and that most of them graduated. He felt that the figure of 70% persistence rate was true of other students as well.

James thought that the UCEP was a more useful program than the TYP and felt "It should be more open and there should be more programs like the UCEPs in Canada, in [this province]."

James said that increased access to university had meant that Native people were able to spend more time with their families as well as achieving their educational objectives.

He said:

> there are a lot of people that are aware that you can get easy access, because you know like they think "oh I am 35 years old and I don't want to go three years (you know grade nine, ten, and eleven) and eventually hopefully get into university," so you know they can do it in one year - they can get into the TYP with their average, and I think that causes quite a sensation.

James went on to say that, once students got on to the UCEP, they were inspired to go further with their education. He concluded, "You know I'd like to get into university hopefully this year; when I came here I wasn't sure if I would go on."

Alan

Alan was a senior administrator with the university. At the time of the interview he was in an acting position with student services which included overall responsibility for the university's Native Student Services department.

On the question of the measures taken at the university to increase aboriginal participation and academic persistence Alan identified three major initiatives:

> one is the development of an Aboriginal Student Policy which clearly states a desire to increase aboriginal student participation at the university. It gives us a basis for some of our other activities and conveys the will of the community to our faculties on aboriginal matters. The second would be the creation, some years ago now, of Native Student Services as an office devoted to the provision of services to aboriginal students, particularly respecting their transition to this campus, the ongoing problems of funding, and the cultural issues of importance to aboriginal students. The third thing is the Transition Year Program (TYP). The TYP is a program which allows for some pretty good assessments of candidates for university study, the admission of those people into an unclassified year of studies, followed by a guarantee, on

> successful completion of that year, of admission into the faculty in which they would like to study.

Alan commented that the TYP was, in his view, one of the finest access programs in Western Canada. He felt that the last two measures also addressed the question of persistence. According to Alan, the TYP was designed to ensure persistence; the services available through Native Student Services were structured to avoid unnecessary student withdrawal.

Alan believed that the services he had outlined, which encouraged academic persistence, would make the university more attractive and therefore have a positive impact on attendance.

> I would say that TYP, which provides the skills to persist, is a key program in our efforts to increase aboriginal attendance.

He felt that his belief was supported by the fact that, ten years ago, there were only about 11 students whereas there were about 80 in the current year's program. Also approximately 70% of last year's TYP class was currently studying in faculties within the university, completing their programs.

Alan pointed out that funding agencies agreed with his assessment of the TYP and that they were looking for programs which provided aboriginal students with the skills necessary to persist.

According to Alan, the university's aim was to have an aboriginal participation rate of five per cent of the total university population. He pointed out that this would be approximately 1 500 aboriginal students, but at present the total was "between 400 and 500 - over 400 who have self-identified." He explained that there was no way of knowing for certain how many aboriginals did not identify themselves as aboriginal.

Alan now considered the extent to which the three measures: the TYP, the Aboriginal Student Policy, and the Native Student Services had been implemented. Considering the Native Student Services (NSS) office Alan said

> I don't believe that Native Student Services is funded or staffed as well as it ought to be; at least I think it's much too dependent on outside sources of funding than it ought to be.

He pointed out that about 50% of funding for the operations of the office came from university funds. The rest came from corporations, the federal government, and other funding agencies. He felt that there seemed to be a discrepancy between what was stated in the policy and the actual funding of the office. Also, he felt that there hadn't been a growth in the resources of the office as the numbers of students increased.

One problem which Alan identified was that there was no liaison officer.

> The liaison program is the kind of program which you would expect to have funded, since one of the goals of the policy is to increase the overall number of students and to increase students across faculties.

Alan argued that the problem of NSS being under-resourced was compounded by the fact that Native Student Services were often asked to facilitate contacts of various kinds with aboriginal communities.

> Sometimes it seems that the quality of the university's relationship with surrounding aboriginal communities is a responsibility which has been left to NSS. We haven't developed an infrastructure outside of NSS that would let us interact with the aboriginal communities in a respectful way. As a result, a lot of those interactions get funneled through NSS.

In Alan's opinion the TYP had reached a stage where its true character and needs had to be recognized by the university.

It had begun as a small program and had operated in an "ad hoc" way. He pointed out that it now had its own students, it bought its courses from other faculties, and it expected its students to be able to transfer into programs in these faculties. It also had a need for liaison and it needed to explain its programs to the greater community.

> The program has developed on a wing and a prayer and it has now reached the stage where, because of the number of students, we can't do it on a wing and a prayer any longer, where we must get the nature of TYP defined and recognized and its duties and responsibilities and its rights and prerogatives, with respect to the rest of the community, understood.

Alan felt that it was probably time for the TYP to be funded in relation to its current role in the university so that it had "the resources to do the job." He felt there were questions to be addressed as to whether the TYP should become a faculty in its own right and whether the TYP should be separated from NSS "both to protect NSS and the TYP." The concern here was that, with the growth of the TYP, there were fewer facilities available to non-TYP aboriginal students. Alan felt that to aboriginal communities, the TYP's potential to respond to their needs for people with specific professional capabilities led them to see it as a forerunner to an aboriginal faculty or college.

Alan thought that the prime duty of NSS was to the students on campus at the university. However, there was also a need for an agency which could facilitate liaison between the university and aboriginal communities over areas of mutual concern, such as research work being carried out in the communities, or university courses being offered either through outreach or on campus. He felt that NSS tended to be used for this liaison process at the moment, but that the university should define a vehicle through which it could relate to aboriginal communities.

Alan described a research project he had carried out in the summer with the help of a summer student. The project examined the various expectations of "all kinds of people on and off campus" from the perspective of offering a recognized liaison mechanism. The student came to the conclusion that "there are a lot of things falling between the cracks because there isn't any such vehicle."

He pointed out that a university in another province had a position entitled Advisor to the President on Aboriginal and Native Issues. This initiative had led to the opening of a "First Nations House" on the campus. Alan felt that his own university could do more in that area. One of the Aboriginal Student Policy's specific objectives was the provision of an aboriginal student centre, and Alan's comment was:

> I don't think we've done enough with respect to that objective and again, like the funding of Native Student Services, the discrepancy between the policy and the reality is a topic of regular conversation among aboriginal people.

On another topic, Alan said that in order to raise awareness in the university community at large about aboriginal issues every year the Aboriginal Student Council sponsors Aboriginal Awareness Week,

> and those of us who feel some sort of commitment to cultural diversity and to the benefits of that cultural diversity attend and make very much of it.

However, Alan went on, "The majority of campus just goes about ignoring it." He felt he benefited from attending the events, and went on to mention that the Human Rights Office had just started up a student theater group which would help in its educational efforts to enhance the respect for human rights generally on campus.

Speaking further on human rights, Alan pointed out that it would be difficult for non-aboriginal Canadians raised in the social context present in Canada over the past 60 years to emerge without some stereotypes about Native people which were not in conflict with notions of aboriginal people as "lawyers, teachers or professors. When these stereotypes are expressed in words or actions, we have a racist incident."

Alan pointed out that there were procedures to deal with racist incidents. These included the university code of student behaviour, the faculty agreement, and the non-academic staff agreement. These agreements all contained provisions through which disciplinary action could be brought against students, faculty, and support staff. The office of human rights approach was to help complainants deal with the personal impacts of the incident and outline the options available for dealing with the matter. He went on:

> I should be careful to say that not everything which is originally perceived as racist or demeaning turns out to be so. Assume, for example, that an instructor tells a class that tuberculosis rates are higher in the northern Native communities than in non-Native communities, and further assume that this is a scientific fact (that is, the majority of experts in the field hold it to be true). Assume also that an aboriginal member of the class takes exception to the statement. Our view is that this situation presents an opportunity to build on mutual understanding. Perhaps the instructor can learn to do more about putting such statements into an appropriate context; perhaps the student can learn to more effectively communicate how such statements have a differential impact in a multicultural classroom.

Alan felt that keeping students motivated in class is good teaching practice and that statements or actions which made certain students feel devalued (whether because of race, gender, or disability) were not productive. Alan hypothesized that the instructors attending the brief orientation sessions on aboriginal issues were possibly those who already had a good sensitivity to the area.

As regards incorporating aboriginal content into the curriculum, Alan said that he approached education from a student centred point of view. With this view, it was possible and beneficial to incorporate examples which were relevant to the student. He felt that this did not compromise the integrity of the discipline. However, certain subjects such as law and history dealt with "matters about which aboriginal peoples and non-aboriginal peoples will be unlikely to share the same truths." He felt that, while law and history were obvious examples, there were other subjects such as education foundations, sociology and anthropology to which the comment applied to some degree. However, he felt that the university had a policy to make curricular changes to incorporate aboriginal content, and that this was another area where there was a gap between the policy intention and what had happened.

Alan indicated that, while the School of Native Studies was an example where the curriculum and teaching methods had been adapted to include elements meaningful to aboriginals, he knew of no conscious effort to incorporate such materials in other parts of the university. He did indicate, however, that there were some instructors, sensitive to aboriginal issues, who did make attempts to incorporate such materials and methods.

Commenting on the different meanings of knowledge, Alan said that we had spent a lot of years suggesting and even saying to aboriginal peoples that they really have no knowledge base - that true knowledge came from western Europeans through a scientific process of research.

Recently, Alan had witnessed a debate on a study which indicated aboriginal healing methods for psoriasis had achieved better results than western medicine. The debate countered the argument that western medicine was the only source of true healing. Alan recalled the discussion between "two healers one of whom said the whites aren't ready to hear yet" when it was suggested that aboriginal remedies be shared with whites.

On the efficacy of the policy overall, Alan felt that "the numbers have gone up and they've gone up phenomenally." However, he pointed out that aboriginals were less well represented in the sciences, engineering and medical areas than in the arts, humanities and education areas. He went on:

> I know we have some real stereotypes and biases to overcome in terms of places for TYP graduates in the sciences areas from within the campus. However, the total numbers continue to rise. On the persistence side we are like most other post-secondary institutions in Canada, and I think it's fair to say quite disappointed we don't see as good persistence rates as we might like to see.

He continued:

> I think that overall the persistence rate for Native students is not as high as non-Native students. I think that the TYP and the kind of academic support that is behind it improves persistence considerably.

Alan felt that funding was very important to the persistence level of students, but he also felt that the university needed to close the gaps between the policy and what was happening, in order to improve both the participation and persistence of aboriginal students.

Alan mentioned critical mass as another important factor related to persistence. On a faculty by faculty basis, if numbers reached "around 25%, a critical mass is created, which pushes the faculty to change. Until that point is reached, real change is difficult."

Alan recognized that this percentage was probably unattainable for aboriginal students. However, he pointed out that "success breeds further success and change." He felt that increased numbers made the campus more hospitable for aboriginals which, in turn, encouraged more to attend. Alan felt a First Nations House or some other facility was important in that the university community would be able to see a concentration of aboriginal students. He ended by saying that the student lounge was really important in allowing the aboriginal students, who may feel themselves to be in a foreign environment at the university, an opportunity to relax.

Alice

Alice was on sabbatical leave at the time of the interview, but came in to the university on a part time basis and agreed to be interviewed. She was a professor in the area of family studies and had also held senior administrative positions.

Alice indicated that her connection with the School of Native Studies meant that she worked with the director. In fact, she had served on the school's governing council for four years and had worked with two or three directors. During that time she was interested in some of the issues relating to interaction between the school and the other university departments, and one example was the Transition Year Program (TYP).

Alice said that aboriginal students did not necessarily enter the transitional program from high school, do a transitional year, and then move into other faculties because many Native students entering the university came in "like any other student."

Alice recalled that there had been a big discussion over the years of her early involvement about quotas but if Native students could qualify in the regular way then "we think that's wonderful." In Alice's view, Native students didn't want to be "second class citizens" and would rather enter university in the regular way. In some cases they did not have the necessary educational background for this, so in the Transition Year Program these students had the opportunity of being "brought up to speed," but with a lighter load of courses.

According to Alice, the TYP had grown and was successful. Although many aboriginal students entering the program eventually moved into the School of Native Studies to complete their degrees, and this had put some large demands on the school, many Native students were now completing their degrees in other faculties.

Alice commented on the School of Native Studies.

> It's looking at government; it has looked at certainly the kind of interaction between Native populations, policy issues and it's a study of Native peoples and their culture, and many of the issues that face Native people. It's not just for Native students - it's for anyone who is interested in these areas. And many Native students want to go into nursing, home economics, medicine or physics or whatever, so to think that this is the only place that Native students want to go to is wrong. I think the tension that we see on the campus is the demand for Cree, for example, which in this institution falls in a very small school with only two faculty members. Native studies now has three. The Cree program is completely oversubscribed. It's a wonderful program, and yet because Native studies is a program where they want to develop their own students who will be majors they can't just be a service orientation with two or three professors. So there are these interesting tensions as these areas develop, especially in times of limited resources.

Alice went on to say that the School of Native Studies was subject to a great deal of attention, and in some cases contrasting expectations from the aboriginal community. This created problems for a small school which had limited resources. She went on to explain.

> There is no one Native community; they all have different expectations. It's not a cultural centre, it's not an advocacy centre, it's a high quality educational opportunity and it has to fit within some of the rules of the university. I think we can learn a lot from Native people in terms of how we operate.

To illustrate further the level of involvement by the aboriginal community in the School of Native Studies, Alice said that the organization of most of the faculties on campus was that they had a council made up of all the faculty members and a few outsiders which made the policy for the faculty. With the School of Native Studies, however, probably two thirds of the council were outsiders so that they could be making decisions for what the unit was doing academically. In her view, the people had to be "brought forward" to understand the procedures but she didn't think that would be unique to Native communities. "It would be true in [small town] or anyplace else."

Alice argued that if the community of [small town], for example, were telling the Faculty of Arts what to do there would be similar tensions. Alice felt that the level of involvement from the aboriginal communities had been an interesting development, and she felt that one expectation held by the Native communities was that there would be much more service out to the communities. She talked about a report which had been completed last year on the School of Native Studies,

> which had mentioned the visibility of it, the centrality of it within the university context. It was not developed like some of the separate units of Native studies in other institutions. It's within the university, so that has some strengths but it also has some uniquenesses and positive things. So it is a very interesting

> unit. It includes things like a group of elders who are associated with the school and also students, and they are wonderful. I've developed some wonderful relationships with elders and come to respect them for their knowledge, their good common sense, and rich offerings of a foundation to the things that were happening.

Alice went on to describe the problems that aboriginal graduates sometimes face in finding employment within their own communities. She knew of four or five Native students who had been among the first to graduate, but who had been unable to find work in an aboriginal community. Alice's view was that the students had encouragement from their communities to enter a university program, but when they tried to get back to the community they were told that "you don't fit in any more." Alice felt that there should be an interrelationship so that students could be reintegrated into their communities. She indicated that aboriginal students she knew felt this to be very important.

Discussing the aboriginal community's desire for more outreach programs, and the university's response, Alice said that there was an outreach at a nearby community but there was no formal affiliation with the university. She indicated that before there could be formal affiliation there had to be full consideration of all aspects of the outreach program suggested. What had been done was to offer university courses in Cree, for which there was a big demand by Native students.

In this example there were some tensions because, although there were some Cree instructors available locally to provide instruction, more were needed. This meant that potential instructors had to be trained so that they, in turn, could provide the proper level of instruction to the outreach students. These instructors were then accredited by the university. Alice said that the main reason for standards of instruction was to ensure that programs were up to the standard of other schools so that students' qualifications could be accepted everywhere.

There had been a tension in teaching Cree between "the oral tradition and the linguistic, structural and all the rest of it." Alice recognized that the university had been imposing different standards and methods on the program than were expected by the community. She wondered if it might not be reasonable to expect a different level of instruction at a community cultural college.

Alice went on to discuss another outreach program to the aboriginal community. In this case a university department, specializing in family studies, had offered courses there for several years, and, in Alice's view, the university should be looking for more outreach opportunities. Alice felt that Native communities would prefer students to study in their own home communities because they find it difficult to make the transition to the university environment. However, she indicated that non-Native students in nearby towns were saying much the same thing.

Alice felt that outreach had always been offered on the basis of request. Groups would contact the department and the two parties would get together for discussions. She supposed that the first step would be the identification of need. For example, aboriginal groups may request programs other than Native studies.

When asked about the Native people who lived in the university's own city, Alice thought that a major factor in success would be preparation. Here, the transitional program could be useful, since encouragement and support were, in her view, crucial to student and program success. Alice also mentioned a project offered to a local reserve which emphasized the empowerment model. Programs were being developed from that framework.

On the subject of incorporating elements of Native culture in the curriculum, Alice indicated that this was an important feature for many Native students she had dealt with on the School of Native Studies governing council. According to Alice, these students didn't want people teaching courses unless they had a Native perspective. The first director had not been a Native, but the present director was a Blood Indian and the students were happier now. The message she got was that the students wanted a Native perspective on the kind of experience they had at the university: the teaching, the values and the atmosphere itself. The students felt that there were different ways of viewing and looking and perceiving. Alice felt that "we do it this way because we've got a certain kind of specialization and they would do it differently - 'Until you walk in our shoes, you can't really understand it.'"

Alice felt that the university's policy for admission was at least trying to see that all people have access. She also felt that the university needed to revise its view of the family. The idea of the "Canadian family," based on the Anglo Saxon model, had to be eradicated and Alice felt that all people must accept that there were Indian families and that there were also Indian cultures which were distinct and valuable. Alice went on to indicate that while the university had attempted to increase aboriginal student participation in many ways, there was still a way to go in fully integrating aboriginal culture and heritage into the university:

> we've got Native studies, we've handled that, we've got two spaces in medicine, we've handled that, and they have to fit in and somehow the policy has got to be broader. I see that there's got to be lots of opportunity for bringing that richness into our study of business policy, or law.

Elaborating on the inclusion of aboriginal cultural elements into curriculum, Alice thought that universities were very reluctant to change the educational system. However, she went on to give several examples where changes had occurred in the face of opposition or apathy. She had hoped that changes would happen more quickly, particularly when related to treating all people more equitably or in a non-racist fashion. One example of change in the face of opposition was qualitative versus quantitative research, and Alice commented on how long it had taken to have these techniques adopted. Alice found it depressing that change took so long, but found some hope in relation to aboriginal students

> just the fact that you have Native Students in our classes that are here, there's a presence on campus, there is a School of Native Studies, there are students who are Native on different programs, there are students who are female in engineering. I think that that changes the mix, the discussion and the thinking. It's got to happen. We don't have enough of that kind of mixing and I feel sad sometimes when we have such a strong identity that there's not a lot of discussion amongst groups.

Alice felt that there was some confusion about the School of Native Studies, and programs such as the Transition Year Program, or the university's Native Student Service unit. She clarified the notion that the Native Studies School was not transitional:

> it's an area of study just like arts. The Transition Year Program - they get very few students moving from transitional year into the [Native Studies] program. The thing that they provide to all the transitional students whether they go into science or arts is Cree. Generally those students take that subject.

Alice went on to point out that Native Student Services was separate from the school. Students sometimes thought that Native Studies was a faculty, but it is a school. According to Alice,

> the university tried to make it quite clear that the services are provided for all students and the academic thrust in Native studies is in the School of Native Studies. The school's mandate is to offer a program and not do community programs or outreach.

Alice agreed that there was a problem with integration on the campus but this was not solely with Native students. The same applied if the students were Chinese, for example. She wondered why we didn't take a more integrated approach because once you have a hook to somebody who's here and who's interested in you, you've got something exciting. You come away with a positive feeling and you probably share that with somebody else.

Alice thought that the university as a whole had made some steps in the right direction, but she felt that more progress was necessary. She argued against complacency, for example, she felt that many colleges had tried to make the cultural environment for Native students more comfortable by adding aboriginal elements. She felt that the university could go much further in that direction.

Alice felt that there was support in the aboriginal communities for community members working on something such as education. She felt that the Native communities were much more supportive to community members than other communities in society.

Alice wondered if we had ever

> asked people who are experiencing this "what did it mean to you when you came in?" I would guess the loneliness and - you needed something at this point in time and now you've got an assignment due, and you just didn't hand it in because everything just sort of fell apart. And you're not used to having to phone and tell someone it's going to be late, and the other person doesn't

> understand at all - four kids and nobody there to help you. I think we have a lot to learn by listening, and maybe hearing what people have to say.

Beth

At the time of the interview, Beth was the university's vice president responsible for academic and student services, including Native Student Services. Beth said that the university had taken several steps aimed at improving aboriginal student participation and access. One of the most important things that the university did which would facilitate the entrance of Native students into the university was the Aboriginal Student Policy. In that policy the aim was for at least a five per cent representation of aboriginal students in the university population because that was the percentage, approximately, of the Native population in the population of the province. She thought that the expression of that policy as official university policy together with some assistance in faculties in helping the goal being achieved was very important.

Beth went on to indicate that the university had a Native Student Services program which worked through Student Services and reported to the Dean of Student Services. This had been active for several years and they had developed a Transition Year Program (TYP) to encourage Native students to come into university. In this program, the students could complete three courses instead of the usual five and this counted as a full load.

Students got a lot of assistance and support, emotional or personal, and the program was growing very rapidly; there were some 80 students now as opposed to "probably fewer than 20 a couple of years ago." She said

> when you look at the demographic profile of the university, you see quite a large number of students in the first and second year, a drop in the third and fourth and the first thought is "Oh, failure to complete." I think that a better explanation at this point, and a few years will tell the tale, is that we had two big intake classes that are beginning to move through the system.

Another interesting thing about the TYP was that, originally, most students went into the Faculty of Arts whereas now there was a much larger dispersion with several going into engineering, science and the professional faculties. She thought this was a useful thing because seeing Native role models in the professions would probably cause this process to snowball. Beth thought that in a couple of years there would be something which she called a "critical mass." She said

> last year the Aboriginal Student Society, which is very active indeed, and that's another important aspect of this, gave a round dance in the [location given], which was just wonderful. I went and it was a marvelous experience because suddenly I saw that there was a critical mass of students who certainly were integrated within the university but also had a support group in the same way that the kids in a particular faculty form a support group; the kids in the ski club form a support group, and it was a group for them to belong to as well as belonging to the whole university.

Beth went on to say that a number of faculties, for example medicine, had set aside two positions for Native students, in excess of the faculty's quota. Medicine now took 118 students and they had done so for a few years. The two extra aboriginal students must qualify and meet the specified entrance requirements. The actual cut off for other students was considerably higher than the stated requirement, and this usually made it very hard for Native students to compete. Beth felt that additional seats helped rectify this situation and allow Native students to enter the faculty. She went on to describe the faculty, which she referred to as a "lighthouse" in terms of its Native student policy.

> The other thing that the faculty does which, to my mind is just as important, is they give a lot more than lip service to the notion of the importance of the Native position. So they are interested in non-traditional healing (and they have conferences on that) they are interested in the whole question of Native public health, and they are actively involved in research in that area, and they bring in speakers. There's a very clear understanding in the Faculty of Medicine, and I think this applies to other faculties as well, but medicine is just a lighthouse, there's a very clear understanding that if you take a - shall I use the words "a minority student" and say "OK, here's the cookie cutter mold, and we're going to make you like any other white urban physician that we've turned out" - that that is not, perhaps, the best service to that student as a person.

Beth quoted the example of one aboriginal medical student who was "quite brilliant" and had been killed in an accident.

> He was going to be the first Native medical graduate, and the faculty had invested a lot of time and money into his education. The general feeling was that he was a super student and the faculty and university had been devastated by the loss. A very prestigious scholarship was set up in the student's name and there were two bursaries given this year. So, tragic as the accident was, it has highlighted the importance of this program to the Faculty of Medicine.

Beth indicated the other programs of this type for Native students operated in different ways and on different levels; however, they were coordinated and they all knew about each other. It was an organic coordination - the programs shared the same concerns, they talked to each other and everyone knew what was going on. The School of Native Studies was an important part of the set-up although it was an academic department. Beth felt that the school "validated the Native experience" on an academic level. Although the majority of the Native population did not care about academic validation, people in the university did. It was an important bridge that reinforces the fact that

> you don't just come to university to become an apple (red on the outside and white inside). In addition to addressing very specific Native problems in research and teaching, it also has this extra dimension of saying "this is a worthwhile academic field. This is important." I'm a linguist and so I come at this from a language point of view. When you say to somebody "Your language is worth studying; your language is interesting; your language is something we want to know about" that's a very validating thing for a culture.

Beth went on to say that the same was true of other areas of study, for example land claims, which was another big area. She thought that that was an important piece of the picture for aboriginal students. "It's like a jigsaw puzzle where the pieces are beginning to come together to form a picture."

Beth indicated that the director of the School of Native Studies was a Metis and had a very good connection to both students and the Native communities.

> Interestingly enough, he's a Blood, and this area, of course, is largely Cree. We teach three years of Cree but he's managing that very nicely and has a good entree into the community. There are elders from the community who are on the Advisory Council for the School of Native Studies. This is another way in which the community is important.

Beth indicated that there was a definition of who was an aboriginal person, but it was complex. There were several different ways for assuring that somebody was an aboriginal person. It was mainly based on the university definition but there were several other things which were taken into account, including everything from band membership to "much more diffuse requirements." There was a committee in case there was something which was not specifically covered, and one of the members of that committee was an elder. This was mainly to determine if students were of aboriginal descent for university purposes and to allow them access to the additional services.

Beth made the point that having the committee and defining students as "Native" also allowed them to be counted towards the five per cent target. She thought that the fact that the committee had an elder on it was important because it showed that the university's commitment was not separate from the community's.

Beth said that another aspect of the university's policy towards aboriginals was in its involvement in employment equity, and although this was not an educational matter, for employment equity to be successful, educational equity had to precede it. She said:

> it is also a very visible sign from the university that aboriginal persons, as one of the four designated groups, are valued in the university society, and we talk about diversity as important. This is done through the Office of Human Rights. That is one of the things they do - sexual harassment is the other.

Reverting to her points on medicine, Beth mentioned the work done by the law faculty in attracting students. She felt they were also doing a good deal of education in the legal area both of students and generally.

Beth felt that it was not an easy matter to incorporate Native cultural elements into programs and that the Native students did not, as a general rule, want these items added to the courses; they wanted the skills. She wondered how important it was that students had different needs at different stages of their education. She felt it would be interesting to examine the undergraduate training of Native students going into law or medicine. Some people had completed a first degree successfully, so maybe it was easier to do a second degree whereas students who were just starting out in the "competitive white schooling system" may need to acquire the skills to succeed at that level. Beth speculated in what she felt was a broad generalization, that after having achieved success, these students may then have the luxury of being Native again.

Beth mentioned another university in which there had been considerable effort in setting up outreach programs for aboriginals. She went on to discuss the initiatives started in her own university.

> I was thinking about how diffuse or at least distributed the initiatives were on campus here, but I think that's very typical at least of this university and maybe of big universities anyplace that the successful activities are grass roots initiatives. The trick is perhaps having that organic link, which I think is a wonderful word for it. To involve the university, I think that once that organic link is established, other people who want to work in this domain see what could be done, see how they might participate, see it as a university priority that these things begin to develop.

Beth felt that studying the area of aboriginal participation in post-secondary education was interesting.

> It's certainly an area in which some academic underpinnings would be a useful thing to have. I think we're getting beyond the stage where goodwill and enthusiasm and even very skillful program development is sufficient, and it's nice to have a little academic underpinning as a basis for what to do.

Carl

At the time of the interview, Carl was a senior member of the Department of Advanced Education in the province. He had knowledge of, and had been involved in, many initiatives aimed at improving Native student participation in post-secondary institutions. His comments were therefore more general than many of the other participants in the study. However, the comments formed a good background for the study, and perhaps, gave a government perspective. Carl also advised on the type of data which, in his opinion, gave more meaning to this area of study. These comments are included since Carl was in the position to learn about all types of Native post-secondary education, and was therefore able to comment on the different approaches.

Carl began by indicating that there were a number of things going on in the Native area that went back in the province "perhaps as far as 1978," and he had chosen that year because it was then that the province had tabled

> a policy for the provision of services to Natives on reserves which, among other things, said that all people who lived in the province were entitled to access to all services provided by the provincial government. The policy made it very clear that the educational services to be provided on reserves would be under certain conditions: 1. There would have to be a band resolution seeking the service that was to be provided. 2. The service would be provided on a full cost recovery basis.

According to Carl, this appeared to work well so long as the bands had the resources to purchase the services. He said:

> in our particular department it meant that institutions were certainly at liberty to deliver services and often they did, and sometimes on a cost recovery basis and sometimes not, depending as much as anything on the number of students in the geographic proximity of the reserve.

Carl felt that other institutions which were administered by the government had to adhere more closely to "the letter of the law" and over the years some departments across government had provided services directly on reserves and others had not. Generally there had been a decline in the measure of support from the federal government for bands. He said:

> we have treaty settlements, we have the constitutional status of Natives and we have legislative measures in [province name] particularly which deal with non-status Natives, and so we have Metis settlements, for example we have the Metis Framework agreement. Concurrently we have Native owned and operated institutions wanting to be accredited by the province.

Carl said that, for as long as he could remember, there had been calls from the Native population to have a college solely for the Natives of the province. So far the province had not provided one even though, according to Carl, the education levels were lower and the unemployment levels higher in the Native population compared with the rest of the population.

Carl argued that if education were the key to solving some of the Native problems, then the question of a Native college was top priority. He thought that things were moving along slowly, but he did see the relationships between the provincial government and, for example, the Metis Association as progressive, and he thought that other areas would be discussed by the parties, including post-secondary education or the policing of Native communities.

Carl said that he had become interested in the Native student University and College Entrance Program (UCEP). He was encouraged to learn that the program helped Native people to enter university or college. He was pleased to see that the Native people in post-secondary institutions were doing so well in this and other programs.

Carl indicated that, in his experience, Natives would like more programs delivered within their own home communities, but unfortunately this cost more money. However, government and institutions had been working with a number of Native groups over the last three or four years designing programs which would accommodate this desire to some extent.

The educational partners had tried to conduct needs assessments so that they could measure the size and nature of the educational experience required by the bands.

> We're quite willing to see if we can facilitate [institution names] or whomever to work in [location]. This comes back to this geographical proximity thing; we've tried for the last four years, I guess, to create and implement a program for the training of Native teachers.

The government and institutions had worked on this extensively, but Carl indicated that the money had not been forthcoming. Several areas were posited as possible pilot centres based on the philosophy that Native children would respond more favorably if there were Native teachers and that the program would be community based. Another aspect was that it was hoped to reduce the attrition rate once these people had achieved the B.Ed level. He gave as successful examples the education program for Natives operated in the province.

Carl felt that the present study into measures taken to improve aboriginal student participation and academic persistence at the university would be useful and that it would probably spark more studies. He thought that trying to capture the perceptions of post-secondary education by Natives would be a "huge study."

> The reason I'm struck by that is that I would hypothesize that one could do a structured interview or even a questionnaire that would gather some kinds of data, but the part that would be really meaningful, in my view, would be to get behind those data because there's so much that's there in the way of culture, attitudes and other things that can't be captured in hard data - which are really far more important factors. For example someone may say "Why did you not attend post-secondary education" and tick off the following points on the questionnaire:- 1. too far to go 2. didn't want to move away from home 3. not enough funds 4. didn't know anybody. Let's say that they ticked off 1, 2, or 3; it could well be that there is discouragement from the cultural perspective of going into debt, or just in attending a post-secondary institution because you might then be better off than your peers. You're not going to get that in a questionnaire.

Carl said that a phenomenological approach to this area in which the study would collect and tell the stories of those aboriginals who didn't go on to post-secondary programs and of those who did, would be most appealing to him. He talked of a booklet that had been sent to him which talked about the stories of those aboriginal students who had just finished a program. That was where the reader really got the excitement and the happiness and the trouble and the difficulties of being a Native student in the post-secondary system. Carl felt that the words of students gave a lot more than a questionnaire ever could.

Carl went on to quote the idea that some poor people, including Natives, didn't go to post-secondary programs because they didn't want to get into debt. He cautioned, however, that collecting data on such issues would be complex because of the different groups involved:

> that kind of thing could be applied irrespective of culture because in my experience you will be hard pressed - you may find it difficult to get a unified response. You will have different groups and different levels within those groups wanting different things so you end up with the groups appearing to work at cross purposes - all genuine in their own respects.

Regarding funding, Carl said that one of the things he found difficult to understand was that some Native groups wanted services delivered on site while others appeared "just to want the money." There appeared to be no uniform approach by the different groups.

Carl concluded his comments by remarking on other possible types of study in the area of Native student participation in post-secondary education, while reconfirming his general point that the words of students who have been through programs, or of potential students who have been unable to attend, was to him the most compelling and interesting data.

Dan

At the time of the interview, Dan was the acting director of the university's School of Native Studies.

Regarding Native access to the university and ways in which the policy has been implemented, he said that the policy was to promote attendance and there was, by faculty, a percentage goal for aboriginals. In Dan's view, the simplest way to achieve the percentages was to set aside places for new students who would meet the university definition of "aboriginal."

In Dan's view there had been a measure of success in increasing Native student participation, but he considered that there were still underrepresented students. For example, there were still some departments which were considered for male students only. According to Dan, most of the faculties had few females but the biggest effort and success had been made in the areas of nursing and rehabilitation medicine. These two departments had set aside two seats each and now had three native students in total, with one of the set aside seats not taken by an aboriginal student. Dan explained that this was not unusual at the university.

He went on to give an example that if there were ten seats available and two were for qualified Natives then eight were for non-Natives, but if there were no qualified Natives then the seats set aside for Native students were let to the next two qualified non-Natives. Not having sufficient Native students to fill the seats set aside was a problem.

Another problem was funding, and Dan indicated that funding had been held at the present level over the last four or five years.

According to Dan, it was often assumed that turning over control of aboriginal post-secondary education to the Native bands would solve the problem. However, he felt that this was not a solution because "the amount of money remained the same anyhow."

A third problem was the readiness of natives to go into post-secondary education. This group of students had one of the highest dropout rates and, in Dan's view, this was getting no better with time.

Dan reiterated that the three problems which needed attention were attendance, enrollment, and completion. He thought that the university was doing its share by trying to address the needs of the Native students and said the Transition Year Program (TYP) was a good example. He also felt that the quota, five per cent goal for aboriginal students as a proportion of the university's student body, was good.

Expanding on the theme, Dan said that the university had 73 students in the transitional year. He didn't know how many qualified Native students had been unable to enter the program. In Dan's opinion, the TYP was a very successful and desirable program.

Speaking of his own school, he said that there were 91 students in the School of Native Studies and that 62 of them were aboriginal. Dan indicated that over 70% of the students in the School were female, and he speculated that this was because females had more incentive for learning. After all, they had the children to look after. In Dan's view, females in the aboriginal culture looked at education from a status perspective but that this was the reverse for Native males - "from a cultural point of view it [education] did nothing for the male standing in the community."

On a more general point, Dan argued that most of the friendship centres (drop-in centres for Native people) had been started by females, and that males only joined in when the centres were well established and successful. He said:

> I think that education is not seen as providing whatever those needs are for aboriginal students back in high school, and I think the extremely high dropout rate with males and females - I'm sure that starting families comes into that for dropout rate, but the question is, and the reality shows, that 10 years down the road, it's the females who are coming back and not males - and yet in the political system it's males who are still dominating.

Discussing the current study in general, Dan suggested

> talking to our students, students who are in the Transition Year Program - why are they here? Two major areas are law and education and there are a large number of Native students in these faculties.

Turning to Native student academic persistence, Dan thought that the highest dropout rate occurred in the first year "regardless of race, culture or whatever. So is the native dropout rate any higher than the overall university dropout rate?" He went on to address his own question:

> but people who come to this university from outside [the city] - is their drop out rate as high, or higher, or lower than Natives from the settlements and reserves?"

Dan felt that the difference was "that sense of a small community" and the cohesion possible in these smaller centres. He went on to add that experiences of increased Native student completion rates on outreach programs reinforced his view.

> It doesn't surprise me that when you say you took the program out there, the dropout rate just fell right off, and you're looking at 80% completion. The supports, the family supports, just mental supports there that keep students going - that's real cohesiveness.

Continuing to speculate on dropout rates, Dan thought that the dropout rate would get higher the further away the students got from the university in distance, in culture, and in experience with educational institutions. He thought that the crucial stage might be in trying to convey to young Native people that education was important and that dropping out, even in grades 9 and 10, was not going to be conducive to improved employability, self esteem, or life style. He did think, however, that funding might have a big part to play in dropping out.

Another thought was that, in Dan's experience, female students were often criticized by their boy friends for wasting time in school instead of being at home looking after the children. In his experience at this and other universities, this had never happened the other way round, with a male student being encouraged to leave a program by a girlfriend because he was wasting time.

Regarding institution size, Dan said that, in some cases, it was better for the Native students to be in a smaller environment because they found it more difficult to cope with the "large" university atmosphere.

On the question of incorporating aboriginal cultural elements into the curriculum, Dan cited his time in a university in a different province and said that the most important thing to remember was, "who you are teaching." It was important to remember that aboriginal students have a different background and a different culture and, in Dan's view, if some Native ideas could be brought into the lectures it would make them more relevant to the students. At his previous university this had worked admirably, but Dan felt that this approach was, after all, "just good teaching practice." Put simply, Dan felt that an instructor talking to any group would try to make the content and examples relate to that group.

He went on to say that

> what I was trying to point out was that knowledge is not group or culture or society specific. That while there is definitely an advantage, males can only talk so much about females no matter how much they study them, how much they talk to them, how much they are around them, there is always that one area that they will never get into because they're not one. Same with Blacks, but to say that only Blacks understand Blacks - where does it end? Only ten year olds can understand 10 year olds? Children should be teaching children? And this is what I'm trying to get across is that knowledge comes from various areas; it doesn't come in narrow streams that don't cross over, and people can become knowledgeable in certain areas that you would not expect them to be knowledgeable in.

Dan said that identity was sometimes a big problem for aboriginal people, and reiterated some of the problems Native students have on entering universities or other large institutions.

> Natives identify themselves so much with that as being the definition of them, that they cannot see themselves as being other things; that Native females are also females, the majority of them are also mothers and grandmothers, or maybe even athletes, that they're all of these things including Natives, that Native isn't a little box that they're in and that defines them and that's it - period. That they can go to PTA meetings because they do have kids who are in school, that they can go to women's organizations because they are women, that they are a lot of different things. I think that Natives box themselves in and historically have been boxed in also, and when you put the two things together, when you are being boxed in and you also box yourself in, and when you talk about the ones that did good when you went out to them, if that's how they're seeing it then that doesn't surprise you that when you're coming into their environment and so they feel strong. The confidence is there, but when they've got to go out to this environment, in the university, is the confidence there?

Ed

At the time of the interview, Ed was an emeritus professor at the university. He had had a long and successful academic career which had involved periods in administration at the highest levels at this and other universities.

Thinking in general about the current study, Ed made a point relating to perception of players involved in major issues such as the development and implementation of the policy to increase Native student participation in the university.

> The first thing I want to say really goes beyond your particular study but I think there is a terrible danger for those of us who are involved in important developments to fool ourselves into thinking that we've created it all, and I'm more concerned about that phenomenon in relation to other matters than I am in relation to the topic.

The reason for his concern was that the university had had very few aboriginals until recently. Ed was not too happy with the present numbers, but he wanted to make the point that, long before he came to the university there was a Native student who made great strides in his education, and he had risen to be member of parliament until the last election. This previous student had two degrees from the university and Ed was quite sure that a lot of people had been involved in his achievements.

Ed first became aware of the university's involvement when he arrived in 1969, and one of the special projects was a teacher education program for the North. From 1969, when he first became a member of staff, Ed was involved with the territory government. The program admitted students and offered courses for the initial two years of the program. After the initial training students received

> a kind of temporary certificate to teach - not very different from the certificates many of us, myself included, received when we first began our teaching careers. They were encouraged to complete the B.Ed degree and some did so on this campus and an attempt was made to help the students to make a transition from their communities to this rather foreign one. It was a worthwhile

> activity. Let me say that the faculty was involved in a number of other programs with aboriginal students.

There were a number of initiatives within the faculty and a number of colleagues lobbied for more attention for Native students on the part of the university.

Ed said:

> I'm not going to make a connection between what I have said and what I'm going to say next because I don't think really it was a cause and effect relationship, except in the very important loose way - that the more a community is involved, the more receptive that community is for development but I really do think, somewhat independent of that - in the early 70's a number of people including [name] from Educational Foundations and Anthropology lobbied with the administration of the university - I was not in central administration at the time - I was probably [position] - so from the early 70's up to the middle 70's when I became [central administration position], I heard about the interest from my [colleague]

Ed went on to say that his colleague in central administration deserved some credit for providing the necessary leadership for developing the position of Native Student Advisor. Her job was to be the bridge between the university and the Native communities; to do whatever was necessary to help the schools. She could help the teachers to be more effective with Native youngsters so that the students would stay in school longer. She also helped to recruit and attract as many graduates as possible from the high schools. According to Ed, these objectives had been achieved over the years.

Ed said that there were things going on in other faculties and that the Faculty of Extension was involved in a number of activities. He was not surprised when, in the early 80's there developed a real interest on the academic side for a program of Native studies. Ed indicated that it took a while for the program to develop and there was a certain amount of controversy in the university before the School of Native Studies came into being. It was felt necessary to call it a "school" so that it could be a separate entity with the head called "director" with all the responsibilities and privileges of a dean, including membership on the dean's council.

> It was a bit of a game I suppose, but I wouldn't be overly critical because if that's what we needed to do in order to get going, well then, that's what we should have done.

Ed said that it was made abundantly clear that the school would have to have close relationships with faculties such as arts and education but then "that's what a university is all about. No faculty is a world unto itself. Bridges along the way are very important."

Ed went on to say that once the university had attracted more aboriginal students, the students organized themselves and there was an active student organization for aboriginal students.

He continued:

> there's a very major issue which people considered and have to continue to consider - to what extent do you develop something which is separate from the whole, and to what extent do you encourage students, in this instance aboriginal students, to take advantage of the programs which exist for everyone, and it isn't an either/or, because at the very same time that the School of Native Studies was being developed, some of the faculties were asking themselves what might be done to increase the number of aboriginal students in their programs and I'll flag law and medicine simply because they come immediately to mind.

He felt that this was an important issue and that, by having a School of Native Studies, a ghetto may be created and that aboriginal students would be less likely to take advantage of programs such as dentistry, medicine and law. He said

> but you know, the sponsors felt, and certainly I felt that it was important for aboriginal students to develop a sense of their own identity and to become more confident as learners and then to go on

> for more specialized study. Also, let me say that there never was the suggestion that every aboriginal student would be enrolled in the School of Native Studies for a first degree - oh no! - it's just that there was the feeling that this was a legitimate academic area of concern and up to this point I may have made it appear as if we were thinking of the school only for Native students. There were, in fact, some non-Native students at the school.

Ed said that he did not want to comment much on recent developments such as the Transition Year Program. He had had no personal experience of racism or prejudice at all. He wasn't aware of great concern when he was in administration. He said that

> this is what they perceive and what they perceive is real for them, whether others will agree with that perception or not; what can an institution deal with? We try to create an environment which respects the individual members of the community - it's a huge institution - consequently people will differ one from another. Professors will differ one from another, but by being supportive at central administrative level to the extent that resources permit, to provide the kind of services that would be helpful.

Ed thought that it made sense to have seminar sessions for instructional and other staff regarding prejudice and racism, but he indicated that there was a limit as to the extent to which an institution could or should control the individual instructor. He said that if an institution worked very hard in providing positive experiences and support then that should overcome or at least begin to overcome some of what is perceived to be negative.

Fred

Fred was a student services officer in the office of Native Student Services. At the time of the interview he had only recently taken up his position and was concerned that he would not be able to answer questions on the history of the Aboriginal Student Policy; however, he was willing to answer on the basis of what he had found out so far. He saw his main role as being a faculty advisor for aboriginal students, as he put it "it's almost like the middle man, liaison between the faculty and the aboriginal student."

Fred indicated that the number of aboriginal students was only about 500 out of a total student population which he estimated at about 40 000. He felt that this was not good progress for a policy which has been in place "since 1975 or the early eighties." He went on to criticize the lack of success

> if you look at the decade and a half, or two decades that they've had to increase aboriginal participation, registration, enrollment or whatever you want to call it, in my mind, although they had the policies in place, they're not seriously implementing them. I think by the time that this university, this institution here gets serious about their aboriginal policy it will be too late for them to help because we will have graduates from grade 12 in the aboriginal communities and they will have the qualifications to meet the entrance requirements. So, by the time the university is willing to act on it, it will be too late for them to do anything because we're going to have the numbers anyway. It's really at this point: for the next couple of years it would be good if they were serious and made some changes, but you know, five years, we'll have those numbers regardless of what the university policy is.

Fred felt that the TYP was "working exceptionally well" but that not enough was being done in terms of regular faculty students. Fred said that the policy included a goal of five per cent aboriginal students in the university as a whole but felt that not each faculty would try to achieve that quota. Fred felt that Native students were at a disadvantage, particularly those coming from the North, because

> it's only recently that we've had facilities in the North in terms of schools - where they are now able to offer sciences. I know when I went to school our school didn't have a science lab, chemistry or physics or anything like that, and that in itself creates a variable because you have to come to the city or you don't even qualify for admission so that's a problem. So this is where, if the university was serious about their policy then they may want to overlook those admission criteria.

Fred argued that the non-matriculated student policy could be used to allow aboriginal students who had been disadvantaged to enter university programs. He felt that if students had to upgrade their qualifications prior to entry to the university it made the overall course too long for individuals.

> I mean, you can go to [province name] vocational centres and take two years of upgrading to upgrade your secondary qualifications so that you can apply here. I had a student in the other day, this is only her second year here and already she feels she needs a break because she has been going to school for four years now. She's a mature student, but she's just had enough of it, she needs a break. She's in the arts faculty and the classes she is taking, there's no reason why she had to get first grade twelve subjects, and as a mature student you take the class and if you do well you get the mark, and if you don't - then I'm a good example of that, didn't graduate from high school. I came to the [other university name] as a mature student and finished my arts degree.

Fred described another example of a potential student who could benefit from this entrance route. At the time he was working on this person's query and didn't know all the regulations, although he felt that the non-matriculation route was a good possibility in this case.

> I had a guy phone from [town] who has worked and has an extensive background in terms of employment history and land claims in Indian Affairs and is looking at coming to university here and getting a degree. Now he has a very limited education level but he could do it. He's got good writing skills; he speaks well. It's like he's an educated person; he's mature enough and has determination to do it.

Fred was of the opinion that the structure of the university often reflects the community within the university.

> It's interesting to see how the Native studies department is separate from the Faculty of Arts. I've had a couple of students come in here and ask why that was, and they had heard on campus that Native studies was a "Mickey Mouse" outfit and "what are you going to do with a Native studies degree?"

Fred pointed out that he completed a Native studies program in a different university, and that it was "pretty intensive, more so if you did honors in history, and if not better, I say equivalent to any other faculty. " Fred said that the Student Ambassador Program was particularly appropriate in that it hired students to go out into the aboriginal communities to promote the university and the Native Student Services Office. Speaking about another university Fred drew attention to the fact that

> they have, this year, 2 000 aboriginal students with a campus population anywhere from 16 000 to 18 000 students and they don't have an office like Native Student Services. Last year they hired a position called Director of the Aboriginal Students Resource Centre and her job is basically to increase and maintain aboriginal students at the university. I'm just trying to contrast the two situations where they have a high aboriginal population, no staff, we have staff but no aboriginal population and I think if we would look at that situation we would find that the difference is in terms of admission policy, administration and that kind of thing.

Fred felt that there was not much correlation between aboriginal students failing and the discouragement of other aboriginal students to take up university places. He pointed out that students came for different reasons:

> in fact in the communities you always get the occasional student that is here more for the prestige so he can go back home and say "well I'm at university you know" and people know that he's not considered a role model because they know that he's just there so he can brag about it - so if he fails it's not taken seriously.

Fred felt that the office of Native Student Services was a prime example of a measure which increased academic persistence.

> Just for the short time I've been here, students that I've dealt with feel a lot more comfortable coming to me working as a middle man, liaising between the faculty and them than going directly to the faculty.

He felt that it was very difficult to measure the success of the office. Speaking of a TYP student he said

> if she goes on to graduate I can't say I had anything to do with it, because there are other variables involved and so it's really hard to measure.

Fred felt that the TYP had improved and increased aboriginal student academic persistence and participation.

> I just wanted to point out that over the last years the aboriginal enrollments here had definitely increased. I mean the trend is set, each year the numbers are increasing.

Speaking about the enrichment of all aspects of the intellectual and cultural life of the university, Fred felt that the Native Student Services office relied heavily on the measures introduced by the Aboriginal Student Council, including Native arts displays, fashion shows and a pow wow.

> But in terms of intellectual and cultural-intellectual, like it's difficult for this office to do anything in that respect. We still have professors that still are a little bit - still don't accept the validity of aboriginal societies and so there is some difficulty there and students come across it all the time.

Fred pointed out that the 15 minutes he was allotted to explain the program and services offered by his office in the orientation program for new teaching staff was perhaps inadequate, particularly since attendance was voluntary.

In conclusion Fred felt that the most useful thing which could be done would be to implement the findings of the various studies which have been conducted. "The problem is that as aboriginal people we've been studied and studied and, you know, instead of seeing studying we would like to see programs being implemented." He mentioned that the Office of Human Rights in their study on the

> direction or whatever of the situation of the aboriginal community on campus has recommended that a round table discussion begin with the participation of all aboriginal programs on campus and some outside representation from the university of course, and they start meeting to discuss implementing some programs or solution or whatever.

Finally Fred said

> I think in terms of the aboriginal policy, the goal of increasing almost to five per cent, I think we might not be able to achieve that this year, next year, or the next but I think that in five years we'll be getting three or four per cent.

Gary

Gary was a professor of indigenous law studies at the university where he had been responsible for implementing and coordinating a program aimed at increasing the participation and success of aboriginal students in that field. At the time of the interview he had held this post for three years and pointed out that, in that time, the number of applicants had more than doubled and aboriginal student persistence was now more than 80%. During his tenure of the position, he had seen his "long term goal, to improve the areas of aboriginal rights and try to eliminate discrimination in the legal system" advance steadily.

Gary pointed out that a proportional representation of aboriginal lawyers to population in the province would mean 276 as opposed to the 30 who were practicing in 1990. This had been "pretty well the motivation to start up things in our program."

At the start of the program, Gary decided he had to set priorities, so he had identified four main target areas.

> An awareness and recruitment of aboriginal students, the academic support once they are in law school, enhancing the academic program in terms of make up of existing curriculum as well as developing additional courses in the area of aboriginal law. Fourthly is what I call general cultural awareness of faculty, staff and community at large.

Choosing his first priority of recruitment, Gary had decided to concentrate on it for "the first couple to three years" and his travels to communities, Native schools, and bands where he has talked to "school kids" had reflected this. He had also visited colleges and universities to give students and staff presentations "on the idea of aboriginal people and the law but then focus things specifically on the indigenous law program."

Gary pointed to the difficulty of comparing aboriginal students with non-aboriginal students. "You just have two different role views and two different life experiences that require different criteria for considering their success in law school." He explained that a different admissions policy is in place for aboriginal students which simply recognizes "the culture differences that aboriginal students have."

At the time of the interview, the law school regulations set the quota for admissions of aboriginal students at ten per cent, twice the university's quota. According to Gary, the composition of the ten per cent was changing because the increase in the number of "direct entry" aboriginal students means that there will be less room for aboriginal mature students who have, until now, been included in this figure. Gary explained that, while all the students took the law school admission test, in the case of aboriginal students other factors such as their previous experience would be taken into consideration to offset the "cultural bias" in the test. "We're actually hoping that with our reforms to the admissions category we're not going to have a quota."

The indigenous law program had made a significant difference to the number of applicants and Gary said

> I've had a fairly, I don't say aggressive, but pro-active recruitment policy and those are the numbers so far and that's, I think, realizing that the Faculty of Law when they apply here and they find out that there's somebody here that's specifically responsible for meeting their needs, and as a result most students decide to come.

Gary indicated that he had helped implement various support procedures aimed at easing the way for aboriginal students from the time they decide to enroll, and particularly through the first year. Before Gary took up his post, aboriginal students were required "to sink or swim." Believing that cultural differences made this particularly difficult for aboriginal students Gary saw his role

> to make one system that was going to help them get through first year law school, primarily that's what I'm focusing on; getting them through first year law school. Once they've gone through first year law school they usually can get on to second and third year.

Gary reported that, at the moment, the second and third year students were doing well, and he anticipated that all would graduate. For first year students, Gary felt there was a need for academic assistance and he addressed this with a system of seminars.

> Last year what I did was I had second or third year students who did very well in one or two subject areas and they will provide tutorial seminars in a small group.

According to Gary, as the instructional technique and ability of the student instructors varies, attendance is also variable at the five 90 minute tutorials which take place over a two week period. About half of the students attended regularly, and Gary felt that this was related to success in the program.

> The ones who attended at least 50% or more [of the seminars] all passed. The ones that didn't attend 50% or more, I think two out of those five passed, so that said a lot.

Gary indicated that there was an eight week summer program for aboriginal prospective law students in an adjacent province. Attendance was deemed necessary for less well qualified aboriginal students prior to enrollment in the university's law faculty. According to Gary, the summer program was started in 1970 because at that time there was only one aboriginal lawyer in Canada. Now it was attended by about 70 students from the whole of Canada.

Apart from purely academic considerations, Gary felt that aboriginal students needed support in other areas.

Gary saw part of his job as

> I guess basically just being here and supporting the students whenever I can. A lot of times they just need to talk to somebody because of sometimes feelings of alienation and that sort of thing arise, and this is quite common for aboriginal students.

As well as "just listening" Gary also organized retreats during which

> we went up north to one of the Indian communities, and we participated in some of the traditional ceremony, and that seemed to do a lot of good for the students.

Gary felt that aboriginal culture and traditions were important, and that the mainstream culture could learn a lot from Native concepts of justice. He went on to explain that he was working on the introduction of a new course on traditional aboriginal law. The course would also address concepts of Native self-government and the associated implications.

Returning to the idea of listening to students, Gary estimated that he had discussions with about three aboriginal students a day. The support Gary coordinated was generally available to aboriginal students in the school. However, Gary remarked that in the second term non-aboriginal students could be involved in the tutorial program with the consent of the tutor.

Among the concerns of students who come to Gary for counseling were finances and discrimination. According to Gary "There's always a 'good' student or two in a class who are more or less overtly discriminatory towards aboriginals." This caused problems either through a response from an aboriginal student or guilt in that student because of not responding.

According to Gary, the professors are not openly discriminatory. "I guess its more or less indifference than anything else from the profs in terms of aboriginal issues." However, he felt that there had been an upsurge of interest among faculty members to incorporate more work relating to aboriginal issues, particularly in their first year curricula.

Gary had been able to help with this both in theoretical and practical terms "as long as I make available materials it's up to them whether they incorporate it or not." For example, Gary described the "Perspectives" unit on aboriginal affairs which offered a two day course every year on cross-cultural awareness.

During the two days

> we have small group discussions, there are aboriginal lawyers that come in and give talks; then we have judges come in with elders. So we do a fair bit in those two days to raise awareness and, I guess, last year the students really appreciated it. Particularly hearing it from the elders they thought that was viable.

An optional part of this program was the possibility of sponsoring students on a weekend cultural camp. Gary felt it was extremely important to provide non-aboriginal students with this kind of cross-cultural awareness because it facilitated the representation of aboriginals by non-aboriginal lawyers in as much as the future lawyers gained an understanding of some of the cultural issues involved.

Gary indicated that, to improve attendance at the cultural camp, the school's administration was planning to support it more actively,

> and we've even developed a faculty committee to look into perspectives and see where we're going to go with it. We might modify it into an actual full year first year course.

To stimulate faculty involvement in Native issues Gary sometimes hired guest speakers. "I usually concentrate on getting aboriginal guest speakers," and this is an area he planned to expand in the coming year. Gary also gave presentations to students in the university's Transition Year Program "and I'd say a number of them are interested in going to law school."

Funding was a major problem for Gary.

> The funding aspect of it is outside funding by the Law Foundation and that covers our whole program. However that's been cut back 30%, 10% over the next three years so next year there won't even be enough funding for my salary.

Because of this Gary found that he had to spend time seeking alternative funding which he otherwise would have spent on the program. Uncertainty over funding cast shadows on the future of the program. "It's really hard to run a program because you can't plan very well. You don't know if funds will come in or not."

Gary felt that general funding cutbacks were causing a backlash of feeling towards the aboriginal program because people were beginning to fear for their own futures and were less able to accept the success of others.

Gary had had to cut down on his own recruiting drives because of lack of funds and felt that the university's Ambassador Program would be insufficient to fill the gap entirely. If Gary's position were lost because of cutbacks then he was doubtful that the program would continue in its present form.

Gary felt that the program's students had "self help" in the form of the Aboriginal Students Society to which many were affiliated, but they also had their own association for aboriginal law students "which is formalized and seems like they're supporting each other now." An office had been made available to the students along with a telephone and computer, and they got their own funding. He pointed out that there was one non-aboriginal member.

Expanding on this theme, Gary felt that law students tended to become part of a "family of law" and consequently lost their other affiliations. With the symbolism of gowns and the conventions of the law this had become marked. Gary pointed out that a three year study was in progress to find out student views of their support groups. He indicated that a study of this sort had already been carried out at one of the other universities, the results of which were to be compared with Gary's present study.

In evaluating his program of support measures for the students Gary said:

> I think in terms of participation, just making yourself available to potential students, providing them with information, and showing them that we take aboriginal culture and their differences in that respect seriously and take a welcoming approach - so that pro-active recruitment has been quite effective. The academic support has been effective too. There are more aboriginals giving each other support and that in turn improves things for new entrants. However, the persistence rate is now near 90% which is "pretty high."

Now that aboriginal student recruitment and persistence was improving, Gary had broader issues to address:

> I'm looking for differences in terms of reforms to the justice system itself; the more aboriginal lawyers there are out there the more they're going to provide effective representation for aboriginal clients.

He also hoped that the rights of bands would be more vigorously pursued by aboriginal lawyers. Gary felt that the high proportion of aboriginals in custody was "terrible really" but theorized that with more aboriginal judges and lawyers these people would get a fairer "crack of the whip" and less of them would end up in jail. Eventually, too, he hoped that bands would become much more autonomous, even judging crimes such as murder.

The interview concluded with the matter of funding being raised once again. Gary voiced his fears that some students, particularly Metis, might not be in a position to qualify for a grant and might be then unwilling or unable to take on the commitment of law school. Gary ended by saying

> I think that the aggregation of students, now that they are a visible group in the faculty, has had an interesting effect on faculty. They have become much more aware of aboriginal issues and that, I think, has been a policy of change.

Sheila

Sheila, a fourth year student at the university, was coordinator of the Student Ambassador Program.

> Well basically the Student Ambassador Program started this time in 1990, and the reason that we started it is that we had a number of requests to go round the province and a number of schools coming to us all the time and we had employed at that time a community liaison officer who couldn't cope with the amount of work which was being generated. The lady, her name is [given], was employed full time and then from what I understand it got so busy that they employed another girl who had her degree from [university]. She

> came to us, and she was Assistant Community Liaison Officer. Then she went into her Masters program and then that's the year I came in, and they started this program.

Sheila explained:

> we are all students, the person that started the whole program was a student herself. I guess our main objective is just to go out and inform people; make them aware of what the [university] is doing. There are a lot of bands and communities like that who aren't aware of what the university is doing.
>
> The Aboriginal Student Policy, being in place now, we need to inform the community so that they can motivate their people to come to us. This has been largely well received by the communities. In terms of the communities' response they've been really, really good to us. Some communities will help us, pay some of our expenses to get there, just because they know with the amount of traveling we do every year we need these sorts of things.

Sheila went on to explain the organization of the program.

> Well what we do is recruit at the beginning of every year. We take in the applications, and then I make sure they're fully trained and then they'll come back before they go out on the road, and I personally quiz them and make sure that they know their stuff.
>
> You get through your public speaking and all that sort of thing and then I have them present to me, so that I know that they're comfortable with what they are doing. I'm with them on their first presentation to make sure that if there's something they're not sure about, I am there to help.

Sheila pointed out that all of the materials used were provided in conjunction with the Registrar's Community Liaison Office. This meant that the Ambassador Program did not deviate greatly in its presentations from those provided by other university units. Sheila felt the difference was the Native focus they provided.

Explaining the Ambassador Program's organization, Sheila said that

> normally it's anywhere from six to eight [students] and then myself as coordinator, and then this year we are hiring eight ambassadors and one coordinator just because I'm in my final year and I'm taking a lot of courses and normally I do 20 hours a week.

She went on to indicate that

> the assistant coordinator, we've never hired a person like that before but we have now because I'll be leaving soon, and we need

> someone to take over and because it's all students and it works so well.

Sheila said that the Ambassador Program carried out its own fund raising, because most of its funding had to be supplied from outside the university. She went on to say that the budget was quite small and that some of the students were employed under the university's financial aid employment program. The rest of the funds were supplied by schools and communities to be visited, and funds were solicited by a mail-out at the beginning of the academic year. Sheila felt that the contact with aboriginal communities during this process was useful and helped to promote the program.

Expanding on the theme of contact with aboriginal communities, Sheila felt it was very important to have direct contact with the reserves and settlements.

> The university may go to nearby towns but they don't go right onto the reserves. We could use [reserve] as an example; we get a lot of students from [reserve] and it's important that we go there and inform them of what's happening because they send a lot of their students here. If it hadn't been for the [Ambassador] program - I'm sure they could have got material other ways but when we actually go and give the presentation we give them handouts and counselors' packages. When we go to a school or a community or anything - everything is put into a package for the counselor, and we leave that for them in case they don't have the material. Then they have always got something to refer to and they know who to contact at this office if they need some assistance in whatever.

Speaking on the extent of the program, Sheila indicated that the initial mail-out was to approximately 250 schools, bands, and communities. She pointed out that the program covered "all the band schools, all the settlement schools, and all the schools that have high Native enrollment."

Sheila explained that the length of presentation varied according to the group; it may be

> an hour, only an hour, an hour and a half, it all depends on the age group too. So if they're junior high, the questions and things just aren't as complex as they are with adults, so basically it's for an hour, and if it's adults and we go to [tribal council], it usually goes on for an hour and a half, depending on what level they are and what information they need.

Sheila indicated that students asked questions such as how to get into university and how many Native students were attending at present.

As Sheila explained:

> once we give this package out and put it up then the students usually ask what level do you need to have? How many courses do you take? How many Native students are there? Then when you tell them there are so many hundreds of us here they don't believe it and that's the good part. When you're there, you're a Native student, you're at school and you can actually go and tell them. They have no idea because their counselors - they have no idea, so where are they going to get the information unless we bring it to them.

She felt that the Ambassador Program presentations were extensive.

> We do the School of Native Studies, the Health Careers, we start right from the beginning of the [university] to everything; that's from what's the difference between our departments and finally to how many students are there at the [university]. And this is in addition to explaining the TYP [Transition Year Program].

Sheila stressed the importance of keeping the presentations up to date, and indicated that obtaining current information on the university and programs was one of her most important responsibilities.

Sheila explained that it was difficult to evaluate the success of the Ambassador Program in concrete terms. She spoke about various programs and services as examples.

> They just want to know what it is and so that's what our goal now is, to let people know what it is. Some people will tend to believe that it's not what it is, it's actually upgrading or something. Well it's not so we try to get out there and let them know - yes TYP's at the university. Just to get out there, get our

> material out there, get people knowing that Native Student Services is here and these are the services that we provide and we just send out and we're constantly mailing things and going to fairs all over the place. So it's good now for the students: schools know now to contact us rather than the Registrar's Office because we've been around for a little while now.

As well as reaching people in the schools, Sheila explained that

> we have a training program down town that's a learning centre for people on social assistance and we've been working with them for four years now and they automatically come back to us, so we are reaching other places like that as well.

Sheila felt that things were changing somewhat now because "the younger students are starting to come from high school" but some of the mature students, such as Sheila herself, entered university through the TYP.

> That was the problem before, most of the Native students, including myself, whatever needed to be done or whatever happened in our lives - you're eighteen or nineteen, you're not thinking about university necessarily, and it's not until later when you start having your children and that sort of thing that you realize you need to do something bigger and now with the average age coming down, we can see we're reaching those people who need to come in here straight from high school, and we're getting them, and it's really good.

Sheila felt that the program was of benefit not only to the recipients but also to the ambassadors themselves "in terms of work experience and that sort of thing, it's really, really, good."

Moving on to measures other than the Ambassador Program, Sheila gave her opinion of their relative usefulness. She felt she was in a unique position

> as I came in through TYP and I've been employed here and I'm also involved with the Aboriginal Student Council, the School of Native Studies and that sort of thing. I found it exceptionally positive when I was actually upgrading.

Not only had the response to her initial enquiry been very swift, but also the support she had while upgrading and entering the university was very positive and helpful.

> When I came in - everyone was a little bit apprehensive and you were almost thinking - gee you're the first in your family - and that sort of stuff but after a while with the support that the office gives, the situation has improved over the years. I couldn't imagine coming in any other way!

Sheila went on to give examples of how important the level of support was.

> It was like a welcoming committee everywhere and we've got two exchange students here - (myself and another girl went to Australia and now they are here from Australia) and that's something the office has put up too and they're in awe of everything the students are doing for them.

The TYP graduation was another important boost both to morale and finances.

> They gave out $200 and a kind of plaque for the all round students - the best marks and participating and that sort of thing. What they do now is, in every access route, there's someone who's honored.

Sheila felt that the support given by these measures went some of the way towards countering the discrimination felt by the TYP and other Native students on campus. However, she was aware of the antagonism of other students who felt that Native students were only at the university because of their race. She voiced some of the concerns:

> the mainstream students felt that we're just put in because we're Native. I think the facts that they have are that a lot of Native students are coming here and - how are they getting in? They were never there before so obviously they're doing something - you know they're getting in a lot easier than we are and they're taking up all our seats.

Sheila countered this by explaining:

> I mean I was let in because I was Native, but I also had to work like everybody else to get here, and if I wasn't working I wouldn't be in my fourth year.

Sheila felt that, as the number of Native students increased, the "general population is getting a little bit more defensive because they see these numbers" and mistaken beliefs became expressed more commonly.

> "Well no Natives pay GST," well that's just not true. "No Natives pay taxes." That's not true, "all Natives get free education." That's not true. But when you hear someone saying it in the classroom other people are right away going to believe it.

Sheila felt this put enormous pressure on Native students in the university to try to redress the balance and in some cases, the pressure was too great.

> I've seen some students driven away because they just can't handle that - you know they think like "wow this is what this is like - I'm getting out of here."

According to Sheila the pressure felt by some aboriginal students had had a positive effect, in that it prompted discussion and support among students.

> Because you hear of incidences like that happening and it makes you mad and it makes you tell other people "hey this is what happened to so and so."

Sheila pointed out that, to many Natives, discrimination and misconceptions about them were nothing new and had been encountered by individuals from earliest school days. She went on to say that

> it's not like you haven't handled it before. It's just that here, now, you're a little bit older, you've made it through all the other parts so it's all the same. It just comes from different places.

Sheila's advice to students coming to the university was:

> you just have to stand up for yourself because no one else is going to do it for you.

Having said this, Sheila pointed out that further difficulties could arise when students did stand up for what they believed. Sheila explained further.

> What do I do? Do I shut up and try to get a good mark or do I debate with the professor and the students and then get a really low mark?

Sheila suggested that some sort of "Native issues class" would be beneficial for instructors at the university to give them an understanding of the problems faced by Native students. She felt that discrimination was particularly bad for Natives because

> there's a lot of East Indians and people don't question them being at university. Chinese students - everyone thinks they're brains so of course they're here. Any other racial group, handicapped people we don't even question them being here. The only group that we question are the Native students because they've never been here before, and people are getting freaked out. They don't know how to handle it.

According to Sheila, when discrimination existed in a class Native students had their own grapevine for making others aware of the problems. She explained:

> we're all individuals but once we get collectively together if there's some noise that needs to be made then I think we should make it because no one else is going to do it for us, and non-Native students may feel sympathetic but they're not going to go and make a complaint.

Sheila suggested that an answer to the problem might be that the university should hire a full or part time employee, perhaps in the human rights office, to deal specifically with those complaints. Even so, she felt that might take a "couple of years" to even out the problems.

Sheila felt that looking closely at Native complaints of discrimination and at professors' attitudes and teaching methods was vitally important because

> it's one thing to get the students in here; it's another to keep them.

Lara

Lara was director of the Native Student Services unit at the university at the time of the interview. She had recently been confirmed into the director's position after having been acting director. There had been some opposition from Native students who felt that an aboriginal should have been hired for the position. Lara addressed this issue in the latter part of the interview.

At the outset, she said that many different measures had been taken to help improve the participation of aboriginal students at the university dating back to when the office of Native Student Services had been established in 1975. Lara indicated that, at that time, the office was given the mandate to serve the aboriginal students who were on the campus.

Since then many other initiatives had been implemented. For instance the Faculty of Medicine had two seats specifically for aboriginal students; pharmacy had one seat as had dentistry and dental hygiene. Education had about 20 seats put aside for aboriginal students and had a Native student coordinator. The law faculty had hired a director who was specifically responsible for ensuring that numbers of aboriginal students in the faculty increased and that the students had support in completing the program. The establishment of the School of Native Studies had been a very important initiative which brought in the academic aspect of Native studies, and Lara thought that this was crucial.

Lara said that the Native Student Services unit was interested in what effect the policy on aboriginal students had had on the participation, retention, and success of Native students. Lara thought that the number of aboriginal students coming into the university had doubled in the last two years and that the next step was to try to keep them in the program. One of the initiatives that came out of the Aboriginal Student Policy was the Transition Year Program (TYP). Students could access university through this program and on completion of the one year program had a choice of entering one of eight faculties. According to Lara, the program meant that more Native students could access faculties such as business and science.

Lara reported that the student success and retention rate on the TYP was up to over 80% but that the dropout rate was high after the students transferred to the faculties themselves.

According to Lara, there was a certain amount of support for aboriginal students when they were studying in the faculties. The Native Student Services unit employed a member of staff to coordinate and support students, but Lara felt this was quite difficult when students were "scattered over the different faculties." However, Lara argued that aboriginal students were able to support each other both inside and outside of their special group. The unit's staff were helping aboriginal students to form support groups within the Transition Year Program, but once they were outside this program, and students chose different courses, the failure rate became high and some students had to be asked to withdraw because they couldn't maintain their grade point average to the necessary level. Lara said that the unit was looking at this problem. With regard to the TYP, Lara said that to be accepted, students would have to meet the minimum admission requirements. These are equivalent to the requirements for mature entry. She said that

> our students can be 18 or older. They don't have to be 24, and because most of our students are in the aboriginal community it's only now that we're starting to have students coming out of high school with the required high school requirement, so they are all on the younger end of the scale, and we didn't really want to exclude that group because it was one of our major groups that also met the minimum requirements.

Lara felt it was important for that group to have access, and she went on to explain further.

> In our current set-up students come in and start their first degree program in eight different access routes so it gives them a choice of eight faculties to choose from and after that, as long as they maintain the grade point average of 5.0 they get into the faculty. That has been really good because it has brought in a large diversity in the students' needs and also goals and careers and really expanded that area and we are getting students now in faculties that they wouldn't have been in before. One of our students came over here and she is going into the medical faculty. We couldn't offer her Chemistry 30 so she's having to do that over the summer and I think she's coming into the arts program and it's just wonderful that they are able to access in that way.

Lara explained that the student planned to transfer from arts to science, probably after one term. She said that it had been difficult to get Native students into the science faculty which was necessary for them to utilize the two seats in medicine. She reported that the situation was improving and they were starting to get "quite a few now" into the science faculty. The previous year, for the first time, 31 aboriginal students had graduated from the university. Lara felt that this was a big achievement and she thought that those numbers would improve year by year. She reflected that "there was a time when we couldn't even think of two graduates, now we're thinking of 31." Lara said that this year the Native Student Services had dealt with more than 2 000 inquiries from potential students, and they received 197 applications for positions. She expected to see that number increase every year. Lara also mentioned that the unit now organized a pre-admission interview and that all students who didn't quite meet the university admission requirements were advised on the best post-secondary institution for them.

Lara said that there was a definite need for the special programs resulting from the university's policy because, in her opinion, Native students needed someone who understood them to get them through the initial stages at university. She said

> the first year is a very dramatic change for most students but it is even more so for the aboriginal group, especially those who come from very small communities into a very large centre. It is not all academic. There are all these other support systems which are there replacing your family and the whole community who used to support you. It's a real shock to a lot of students I think. With a program like this it is easier to help than establish another community outside their own community, establish another community at the university here which can continue providing some support. It can never be the same, but something that can help the transition.

When asked how the various measures were working to achieve their objectives, Lara replied that they worked well for enabling access, which was getting better. The university was now receiving more students who met the minimum requirements. She felt the biggest challenge now was helping students to stay and do well at the university, and she thought that this should be the focus now that access had improved.

Lara went on to say that some of the things that interfered with studies were caused by the lack of those supports that had been easily available in the aboriginal students' own communities. In Lara's view, the students had had the support of the family, who were always there when needed. Now, in university, students had to deal with their own day to day problems, and they therefore required support from a different source.

Lara considered that it was her unit's job to find ways of making some aspects of the aboriginal people's culture available on campus. She wondered if the Native elders could help by working with her staff. Lara felt that students required different forms of help if they were to persist to course completion.

> Sometimes it's personal, sometimes it's the system - coming from a different system and trying to fit into another system. There is an aspect of racism that comes up from the students to us. It's still there in terms of how they are taught, in terms of perception, half of it is just perception. A lot of people, even though they have lived with aboriginal people, not to the level or the close proximity they find themselves in at university, and that brings up another very different aspect that's coming up in classes, coming up in discussions, and I'm hoping that as many more [aboriginal students] come there'll come a time that eventually there'll be so many aboriginal students that it won't be an issue at all, and maybe they might be able to participate as instructors because we still don't have that many aboriginal people occupying high positions like lecturers, professors, and playing a major role in the actual education process of aboriginal people. Hopefully when that stage comes a lot of those things can be corrected through the proper channels.

Lara said that she had had a comment from one student who said that he didn't like taking a seat that was set aside for a Native person because he felt that people would think he was inferior. She had another comment that a Native student who may not have taken a seat set aside for an aboriginal would still be looked upon as someone who had come in with inferior marks. Lara felt that was sad because, in her view, everyone who was in university had met the minimum requirements. Lara felt that it was not possible to compare people from different backgrounds. She said that some students from reserves may not have had teachers who were as efficient as others, but this was not the students' fault. In any case, admission was only part of the story.

> Once you're in you're allowed to participate, to access, getting the best education and instructors. Then the difference in students is not so great - you can forget the past.

Lara argued that the apparent difference in skills among incoming students from different backgrounds was quickly eroded as new students progressed on their programs. She went on to say

> you're competing at the same level and what difference does it make when you're getting an eight with your background and I'm getting an eight with my background? So really what this is just doing is allowing people to participate and also accepting that people may be different in how that knowledge was given up to that point. So what are you really judging? It's a matter of how you really look at it because not everybody that has an 85 survives here either. I know students who have come in with extremely high marks. Getting in is only part of the story. Staying in and doing well is another and that it is an assumption that if you come in strongly you'll continue, but it's not always the case. Another thing is that there are some other merits there's no way of measuring.

Lara went on to discuss records and supplied the information below. She said

> we know how many students we have in each faculty and what year they are in. We are keeping very good stats now because we are in a position to do that.

Analysis of TYP graduates by year and faculty 1993/1994

Faculty	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Total
Business	2	5	3	2	12
Law	11	7	4	0	22
Science	17	4	3	1	25
Agr & Forestry	3	1	0	0	4
Engineering	7	0	1	1	9
Education	9	14	18	4	45
Arts	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	45
Total					162

Lara pointed out that not all aboriginal students identified themselves as aboriginal but with the new initiatives she thought that more students were participating in the identification process and saying "Yes, I am aboriginal." Lara thought that, in the past, aboriginal people felt they would not receive the same respect as the other students, but that now the reverse was the case and many were proud to be identified as aboriginal.

Lara thought that having different coordinators provide support for students in their own faculties had dramatically increased aboriginal student participation and success. She also thought that the Transition Year Program had done a lot in terms of improving accessibility even further and also in helping students make the transition from wherever they came from to university community life. Lara felt that life here was very different but she felt it wasn't so bad if aboriginal students were going through it as a group. She thought the group could move forward and stay together as a group, or if not, at least students would have gained the skills for survival in the university context.

Lara emphasized that improving aboriginal student retention was the main challenge at the moment. She went on to say that

> we really need to focus on that and one of the recommendations at least that we have noticed that might bring results is that we need to start involving the communities. By communities I mean elders because we've been trying to do it alone and I think it needs a partnership - we need to form a partnership between the student, our office, the elders and community members so that we are all working together making it possible.

She said there were many different forces affecting students; these were financial, academic, or sometimes very simple things. In Lara's opinion, the whole system need not be overhauled but it was necessary for all people at the university to be aware that aboriginals were "different people." We all needed to be more conscious of what was being said about different people and needed to be aware that some things which might be said in innocence can hurt.

When asked what difference increased access to university had made to aboriginal students, Lara thought it was important for aboriginal people to realize that entering and succeeding at university was a possibility for them

> you don't have to have two heads, or three heads to get into the [university]. You can come to the [university], you can succeed, and just knowing that makes it a little bit easier - gives you that hope and the faith that if - I do things right I can, I have the proper marks, this is what I need to get in, this is what I need to do when I am there, and this is what I need to be successful, and at least you know how to go about it but just to know that you really can get help, you don't have to do it all yourself, that there are other students on campus who can help you, that there are services set up specifically to make it a little bit easier to do it, I think all that is important. And to know that other students have done it before you, and in the different faculties you can see what they are doing and that gives hope, knowing that you have a chance to do it and you will do it and that it's not impossible.

However, Lara said that a lot of the students felt that they may not be accepted back to their own communities after they had been to university. It was still one of the difficulties, but she thought it was becoming less and less so because the communities too were starting to be more aware of the need for skilled people and that degree of acceptance was helping because "a lot of our graduates are now being accepted back into the community and given really important jobs."

Lara felt that the Native communities should continue to work with students as they entered and progressed through university. Native Student Services was trying to

> get the communities involved with their students while they are on campus so that there's no break really or not too long a break, and also trying to help students get a job maybe back into their communities in the summer, to get a summer job so that they are really integrated back into the community and they are not so separated, leaving their community for two or three years and then expected to go back and get accepted, it's harder.

Lara was asked if she thought that measures to increase student academic persistence would also tend to increased participation, and she said that, in her opinion, the term "academic persistence" was not useful because persistence was not always "academic." Most of the time she said,

> it's personal stuff that interferes, and for a lot of students sometimes it's harder to deal with personal problems together with the academics.

In Lara's opinion, there were very few students who didn't continue for academic reasons. On the other hand she knew of some very academically able students who could not continue because of some personal problem that they had to look after. She said that that was one reason why their rate of return for re-admission was just as high as for new admission. A lot of students had to "let go of the academic area for a while, settle the other things and then get back," and she thought that was interesting because she hadn't known that there were so many re-admissions. However, Lara had found from the records that last year they had had just as many students being re-admitted as were admitted.

Lara said that quite a few aboriginal students obtained jobs after the first or second year at university, so she felt that this had nothing to do with academic persistence. Sometimes, she said, the community cannot wait for four or five years for a student to obtain all the skills

> we have some skills now and can work and go back to finish a degree later - so success really can be measured in many different ways.

Lara hoped that, by working more closely with the registrar's office, her unit would be able to trace persistence patterns.

> It's the retention that must be our major concern. We are getting as many students coming as usual, so we really don't get as far as we would, so we will work with the students to find out some of the factors with individual cases of students who have left to find out what it was with them and if there was anything we could have done to help them finish their programs. It will be interesting.

Kenneth

Kenneth was, at the time of the interview, an aboriginal student at the university. He pointed out that his progress to this position had been neither easy nor straightforward.

Beginning his interview with a discussion of measures taken to increase participation by aboriginal students, Kenneth said "just asking Native people in, that there is a problem, just addressing it," is "probably one of the major things" being done on this field now. He felt that there was "a backlash from other students who fail" and who then claim that Native students are given special privileges. Kenneth felt this was unjustified " because a regular student could just go through like a lot of Native students - taking the university transfer program and transferring here."

Looking back over his own educational history, however, Kenneth could see that when he was growing up

> there was almost like a sub-standard schooling process, and I'm not sure if it was really up to par with, I guess, outdated text books and the teachers who were teaching were usually from the cities and couldn't find jobs anywhere else and ended up in these far out places.

Kenneth grew up in two different locations, one urban and the other rural. Because of the unsatisfactory experience his mother had at a residential school,

> she never really pushed education on us because she was forced to go there and their idea of education was making housewives and the men did carpentry.

He missed "quite a bit "of his elementary schooling in the urban centre. His mother would collude in his absenteeism by sending "sick notes" to school.

The friendship of members of other ethnic minority groups was a great encouragement to Kenneth who graduated from grade twelve and subsequently went to a vocational college where he completed a university transfer program. He recollected being beset by doubts about going to university, "but then things started clicking in my head - see. What Natives do you know who actually went to college or university?" He felt the stereotyping he had been subjected to in the past had come back to make him unsure of his position.

> I didn't feel kind of welcome. Like in grade three I remember vividly the teacher saying that Columbus discovered America and, by the way, there just happened to be Natives there, and I thought I probably should be outside while she talks to the rest of the class.

> His two role models, a Native artist and a totem pole carver, had neither of them, gone to college or university or even high school, and the one person, he had committed suicide and the other person died of alcohol abuse.

Kenneth reported that he, too, eventually "ended up dropping out, failing out."

After this negative experience of the education system, Kenneth was "rescued" by his sister, a committed Christian, who suggested that he live with her and attend a bible college. However, he found it was

> a "bridal" college instead of bible college. I wasn't really interested in this relationship at that time, so I kind of dropped out of there and I was starting to get really depressed because I didn't know where I fit in.

He reported his salvation coming in the form of the younger brother of one of the college instructors who introduced Kenneth to a Metis family "and one person is a professor and I got to meet these people and they totally blew away all of my stereotypes." This meeting restored Kenneth's confidence and he thought, "Hey college and university is for Natives."

The relatively high cost of courses at one college in another province prompted Kenneth to enter the university here. Kenneth transferred some, but not all, of his course credits and then did the transitional program for Native students. The program was then called the Coordinated University Transition program (CUT) and

> was for Native students but any other students could have gone in like Metis students and that. At that time there were about 10 of us.

At the university, Kenneth met "lots of nice people and they were really, I guess, culturally sensitive." He entered the School of Native

Studies where he was currently "finishing off a Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies."

One of the positive aspects for Kenneth has been that "university helped straighten out all the lies you were told at elementary school and at high school about what Indians are." He has also had the opportunity to meet "Natives who liked math and that sort of thing so they've been really supportive."

Stereotyping still existed, he found, especially in classes such as anthropology where "we get all these strange ideas from people" about Native people but, for Kenneth, this had had its positive side

> that was probably one of the things that kept me in, too, because I thought, "Well that was a really dumb question." I'm sure I could do well here. These people aren't any smarter than me.

His confidence had been somewhat shaken when he scored a six in the stanine system (which has nine as its highest grade) for his first course, English. "I always did well in English and I graduated with 75 -80%, and I tried really hard in this course and I met up with a six." Kenneth pointed out that, at that time on the Coordinated University Transition program, a mark of four or below meant automatic suspension.

Kenneth indicated that some students in his cohort found funding a problem. "There's quite a few people not getting the funding so they'd have to drop out because of that, then lo and behold you'd have like four people in the year or something."

Kenneth still felt the difference between his own background and what the stereotyped image of Native peoples was, and indicated that this posed some problems for him.

> I'm still going through like a transition in myself. Even though I grew up in [urban centre], I grew up pretty much in a neighborhood which was sort of urban Native, but they had that sort of

> stereotype because we're surrounded with people all stereotyping us.

In contrast,

> the best part of the year was every summer we'd go back to the reserve in [rural location] and spend at least four months there and that was one of the best times.

On the reserve, Kenneth found a freedom and respect which was missing outside.

> You could show up for dinner time anywhere and they would feed you, and all the doors were always open. It was just a whole community sharing and the kids were really respected. We were treated almost like little adults saying like "you're the oldest, look after the younger brothers and sisters" and that sort of thing. We had more freedom. All my cousins were nine or ten years old, and they were driving cars.

As a sharp contrast to this, Kenneth also reported experiencing discrimination "off reserve" in the same province.

> There was this one time that we ended up getting stuck in [province] so I started school there in grade five or grade six. At that time there was almost like a segregated school.

Kenneth remembered being accepted well at first by the other children because it was not obvious that he was Native until

> my cousins came up and they were just smiling and that and they said "he's my cousin," and they looked at me and said "you're Indian?" and after that they stopped playing around with me.

Much the same experience was repeated for Kenneth in the city. He felt he was "almost like a chameleon" until he took a good friend home.

> He said "You're Indian?" I said "Yes." I thought he was my best friend. And after that he'd tell his friends that I was Indian; he wouldn't call me by my name any more he'd say, "Hey Indian come here. Hey Indian what are you doing?" So I didn't hang around with him any more.

Kenneth felt that similar attitudes persisted at university, but here Kenneth had some fun exploding the "Native myths." His reaction to the theory put forward by an anthropology professor that people sat with their back to the wall in a teepee was - "teepee crawlers - people would go outside and reach under a teepee and grab!"

> So that kind of blew away his philosophy you see; although people tended to sit with their backs to a wall because it's safer, in a teepee with teepee crawlers! So it was kind of funny that way because of the multicultural elements.

Kenneth indicated that some of the other aspects of discrimination were not so much fun, however. For example in an English class

> we were put together like in a Native group and at that time a lot of people would make comments like saying "Natives are just a bore" and that sort of thing.

Kenneth said that sometimes even the professors would make assertions, for example "Native students don't do too well in this class because they're not good at numbers." Kenneth felt that the attitude of one particular member of the faculty was racist. It was a Native studies course "and the instructor absolutely didn't want to be in that course." Eventually an argument with a female Native student led to the student being downgraded. Kenneth said he talked to the instructor after class

> and he goes "don't worry about her, she's getting fired anyway. I'm not even going to bother" and that kind of upset me. Why was he saying something like that? Was he giving her that grade because she'd argued some?

In other incidents in which Kenneth felt there was racial discrimination, a professor in a Native studies course

> just concentrated basically on the medical aspects and left it up to you to draw your own conclusions. It's almost like the conclusions she expected you to draw were almost like racist - prejudiced - and Native beliefs were dismissed. She's virtually saying if it wasn't for museums, Native spirituality would be extinct.

Kenneth felt overwhelmingly that most of these observations were made by people who were outside the Native traditions and who didn't understand them. This was exemplified by a demonstration in one class which aimed to discredit the oral tradition. Students sitting in a circle were asked to whisper a message to their neighbor.

> When they talked to the final person it was always different, of course, and they'd say "You see how oral traditions aren't really valid at all" and stuff like that; "if it's not written, it's not true," and that would just totally get me so mad.

In spite of the discrimination that Kenneth felt, there were positive aspects of life at university.

> Keeping me in university has been the support from other Native students and from Native professors and that - "Oh good, everybody's not just ganging up on me."

Another motivator for Kenneth was:

> I'm more interested in the learning aspects of the stuff and bringing it back to my community and that sort of thing, so you concentrate more on learning the stuff.

Kenneth argued that Natives "have been discriminated against for the first 500 years," and he felt that, by having educated Natives in various sections of the community such as the police force, the balance may be redressed. He felt that this was more important than the fears of some non-Natives that a "reverse racism" was taking place, although Kenneth understood and sympathized with their concerns.

> You know even if it's people having negative feedback and saying "Oh those Natives shouldn't be here." That's better than not having Natives there at all. At least they're talking about Natives and the Natives are actually there.

Kenneth felt it very important, for Native student academic persistence, to be able to mix with other Native students in Native student lounges. Kenneth explained the importance of the lounge by relating an incident which happened during the Native student protest against having a non-Native director of Native Student Services.

> It's good to go to a Native student lounge or something like that where people are mixing and that and talking to them and bringing things out into the open particularly when, as during an incident on a Native student picket line, open hostility is shown. There was a student from the university and the Native student who was picketing who went over to talk with him basically said that he couldn't say anything to him because he just kept arguing flashing his stereotype and it was either he hit him or walk away. So he walked away.

Discussing the incident in the student lounge had helped those involved to put it into perspective.

Kenneth felt that part of the stereotyping takes the form of fear of Natives. One of the white students had explained her fears to Kenneth.

> If I was sitting in the passenger seat and a carload of Natives came up alongside, my usual reaction would be fear and I would immediately lock the doors, but she said if a carload of white kids came near you wouldn't have any problems with that, based on skin colour.

Kenneth also addressed the stereotypical idea that Natives are lazy, giving the example of an aboriginal Ph.D. student he knew.

> Like this one lady, she was working on a Ph.D. and she works like eleven, twelve hour days just on strict studying; she works really hard. I've yet to see a lazy Native.

However, Kenneth pointed out that discrimination is not confined to the white people. Sometimes Natives who have been educated find it difficult to be accepted back into their own communities. "They realize, you know, it's like everybody has a stereotype thinking 'Oh, he thinks he's better than us just because he's got education.'" Kenneth felt, however, that "you go there and you don't really force what you've learned on them but you become a resource if they ask."

Malcolm

Malcolm was coordinator of the Transition Year Program (TYP) at the time of the interview. He chatted briefly about the Ph.D. program in general, and indicated that he was working towards a doctorate himself. The interview was somewhat disjointed because of interruptions and had to be completed the next day.

On the topic of professors interacting with aboriginal students, and suggestions some Native students had made of racial insensitivity, Malcolm said that possibly it was not racism but mainly ignorance. He said that there were cultural implications which non-Natives didn't understand. As an example he gave "eye contact" which was avoided in the Native culture. Instructors would say "Look at me when I'm talking to you" but in the Native culture this was not acceptable. To look someone in the eye was being defiant and challenging them, and if the person was older then it showed lack of respect. In Malcolm's view, as a Native himself, it was not easy to change one's attitude to "eye contact," and teachers didn't seem to understand that. He recognized that this was a generalization, and that he was not necessarily speaking to the experiences of all aboriginal people.

> I guess in the sense that all Native groups are different, so I'm doing my theme kind of just in my area and then other people have different cultural values and perception. You see we can't make one blanket thing and say - "well all Natives behave like this."

Malcolm said that he had taught at all levels and then moved into administration. He had been involved in reserve schools and public schools and one thing that kept coming up was the fact that some of the teachers "just aren't connected with Native students," and although they were good teachers, they were not sympathetic to the needs of the Native students. He was of the opinion that teachers should have a course on the location in which they were teaching and an insight into the cultural values of the Natives in that area.

For example, he thought that giving lots of homework was not right because there were no library resources on the reserve and the parents were unable to help with homework. He gave several instances of a university outreach instructor giving the students assignments such as "do a research paper on this" when there were no text books in the near vicinity to use during research. According to Malcolm, the problem was that the instructors did not have a grasp of the situation on the reserve, as far as books were concerned.

Malcolm was called away to a meeting with a student, and the interview was continued on the next day.

Talking about the TYP, Malcolm thought that the objectives of the scheme were appropriate and that the reason for the big success was that Native Student Services stressed the support services and programs which they had in place. The program was running extremely well and there did not seem to be any reason to change it. After further thought he said that

> the only thing is we need a little more expedience on the part of the pupils to come and ask us for help. We thought we had made this clear at initial meetings, at the orientation and other casual meetings we've had. Maybe because they are new to the system also, now they want tutors and some got their tutors early, they were on the ball as soon as they got here and then the others, well I guess they have found their way around but I think that might be an area that we'll probably have to definitely encourage students to take care of.

As far as tutors were concerned, Malcolm indicated that students who had just completed the course or others who had previously worked well were engaged, and they were paid the regular fee. Funding for this came out of the unit's budget.

When asked about facilities such as the Aboriginal Students' Society or the aboriginal student lounge, Malcolm said that these were primarily designed to assist the students find personal support. He went on to indicate that students using the TYP, in his view, needed more support and guidance than those aboriginal students who entered faculties directly.

> My program, the TYP, is quite different from the faculties' program. You see what we have here, two groups of students, if they meet all the criteria to get in as regular students of a faculty, they do whatever they want to do and they use the services that are available to them. In my program, the TYP, those are the ones that they have more control over. I think a lot has to do with your own initiative. You know - some students will go out and find what's available and others just don't have the same initiative.

The TYP had been really successful and Malcolm thought that it was

> mainly because of the support services and the screening that we do. Another reason that it's successful is that a lot of students meet the basic criteria to enter university and, maybe I think the biggest reason that they're not in regular faculty programs is that they are maybe not quite as competitive marks-wise, so this is a way for them to get in. But they do have the basics, so it's not a program that will allow students to come in without having all the subjects that you do, so once they come in they find that they can handle the courses and because they have to have certain averages, like they have to be, I guess, competitive in that sense that you have the core 60 average, because - the core system in some programs, the cut off is like 76 so our students maybe have a 65 for average and can't quite make it and here's a way for them to access university - through the TYP.

Malcolm indicated that the academic persistence for the TYP was improving greatly, and last year the program lost only 2 students out of 76. He thought that a lot of the credit should go to the university for taking on that initiative to determine what was going to make the students successful. He felt that a major reason for improved persistence was the academic and personal support available to students. Another factor was that the TYP hired instructors to teach the regular courses;

> so what they're doing is they're taking regular university courses and they're being taught to Native students, so instead of sitting in the classroom with 500 or 300 students, we take our 30 students and we buy the instructor and an instructional package to teach the same thing.

In terms of the different initiatives consistent with the stated objectives of the university's policy to improve aboriginal student participation and academic persistence, Malcolm thought that the most effective was the TYP because

> here you are dealing with students, well it's a program to see students go from that transition year into a regular faculty, whereas like the Native studies is just a department; you just take courses from them and I guess they don't really have the same mandate as we do. They'll provide the courses and you take them and you pass or fail and that's it; whereas we, even though they're taking both courses, we are providing additional support, so if they're taking some Native studies course and they need additional tutoring - then we provide it, whereas Native studies doesn't - they just provide the course.

When asked about his thoughts on improving participation and persistence, Malcolm said:

> get more students, recruit more students, because our program is getting bigger. Another thing might be to possibly look at it almost in terms of a separate faculty because there is a mandate and there is a program and there are funds involved; administrative decisions that are going to have to be addressed, it's just increasing almost too fast for us to keep it - almost like a department. The faculty would just be bigger in size, have more support services, more staff and availability of courses, and we could handle more students. We need to get more seats in the various faculties that our students are interested in. Right now we have a number of seats available in various faculties - we want to increase that.

Ian

Ian was an aboriginal exchange student from Australia and was attending the university for three months. The student exchange system was part of the university's policy on increasing Native student participation. Ian was a fine arts student; he was also an advocate for aboriginal culture and heritage. He had appeared on local radio and television during his stay, and had played his digeridoo (or "yidica," as he referred to it in his aboriginal dialect) and explained some of the spiritual aspects of the Australian aboriginal culture during interviews on the programs. At the time of the interview, he was nearing the end of the exchange period, and was preparing to return to Australia. He was in the process of arranging to pack the art he had created during the period, and indicated that his work would be shown on his return to Australia.

He agreed to be interviewed on what he thought this university was doing to improve aboriginal participation and academic persistence.

Ian said that he was really impressed with what's been happening here compared to what's been happening back home. He was impressed simply because

> this university's got a policy of trying to get the Native aboriginal population at the university in the same proportion as it is in the community. I haven't been in education administration back home so I don't know whether something like that does exist but I think it's far in advance of what we've got back home and the fact that the student services support unit actually goes out in the communities to try to get students in. Not just the administration staff: they train the students to do it so students who can express what are the current difficulties that are happening go out and I was fortunate, I went out with one of the students to one of the communities while she was doing her presentation to get these students in and I was really impressed by it.

Ian had visited some reserves and settlements in Canada and thought the communities were very similar to the aboriginal communities in Australia in many ways but that they appeared a little more organized. The buildings were in much better condition, and he could see how the people had put money into the running of the communities. Ian also commented that it was good to see a lot of Native teacher aides here as well, which was similar to what was happening in Australia.

Ian said that, in Australia, aboriginal pupils didn't usually go past high school on the reserves and that this was one of the problems.

> The kids mostly have to leave their reserve to go to the high school. There's a reserve that I know of that has a high school on it but usually I think the missions and reserves are in isolated areas and the students, if they want to further their education, have to leave the community. Our communities have become a little bit of a rut for a lot of our people because they are so conditioned to life within the community that they cannot leave. There is so much insecurity and things like that for them to leave and so really most of them stay in their communities or they go from one community to another visiting. You can see after living in a reserve community for quite a long time it is really intimidating, really distressful for them to come off there and go into a city or a town that has proper education institutions.

Ian said that some of the Australian aboriginal students went to grade nine but couldn't quote any figures on access to university in Australia or what was the proportion of aboriginals to the white population there. However, he said the aboriginal representation at universities was well below the proportion of aboriginals in the whole population. He felt that there should be a program similar to the Ambassador Program operating at the Canadian university, where students go out and recruit Native people and encourage them to participate in advanced education.

In Ian's opinion, aboriginal students tended to participate more in certain areas. In Australia many aboriginal students enrolled in fine arts. On arriving at the Canadian university, Ian was expecting to discover the same pattern, however there were only two Canadian Native students in his classes.

He thought that maybe there was a push to get aboriginal students into certain areas of study. In Australia, as in Canada, there were some aboriginal students in medicine and engineering. There also appeared to be a lot of aboriginal students in the "welfare" area. He felt that these directions were taken according to the needs of aboriginals. He felt that a lot of people here own their land, they live on the land and maybe those are the areas, like mining, engineering, and medicine that are the needs.

Ian felt that more progress had been made in increasing Native student participation in the Canadian university than in the Australian universities of which he had knowledge.

> On a superficial level, looking at my student lounge back home and looking at the student lounge here, you can always get a seat in the student lounge back home but not very often here. And they've got the TYP [Transition Year Program] here as well, so for the students who aren't actually in full stream I think that's a great program. It's a really good success and it's not slamming students into a full academic load straight away which would be quite difficult.

Ian was surprised that most Canadian university courses lasted for four years:

> most of our undergraduate courses run for only three years, whereas here - I'm wondering how can these students get through four years when I am feeling stale after three?

Ian thought that it would probably be better if the Native studies department, the student lounge, with the Aboriginal Student Council in the centre, and Native Student Services were in the same building, perhaps on different floors.

In discussion of the second language requirement for the fine arts faculty at the (Canadian) university, Ian indicated that Native students were trying to get their own language recognized as a second language, instead of French or some other language. Ian's feeling was: "In fine arts! Isn't that ridiculous! I can't speak French and most of the students in my class can't speak French either." He said he probably got into the faculty without fulfilling the second language requirement because he was an international exchange student but argued that the second language requirement was a major barrier to Canadian aboriginals who would like to participate in post-secondary education.

Ian speculated that French may have been necessary in the past because students were studying French history. He felt, however, that this had probably been a requirement for some time and argued that the issue should be examined to see if it was really appropriate now.

Discussing the aboriginal student exchange program, Ian said that there were two aboriginal students from this university who went to Australia, and they were both studying law. He had met them in Australia and had a chance to see them again during his stay in Canada. He felt that contact with other aboriginal students from different countries was one of the main advantages of the exchange program, but that the shared experience with other exchange students was especially meaningful for him.

> For me it's been particularly beneficial, not so much the study but it's good to see the different approaches. As an artist I feel that if I wanted to study I could have studied back home but here what's more important is the interaction and being an outsider of the university, because study is such a little world of its own.

> It's only because I'm in fine arts that I have to do that because what I do is a lot to do with my environment, with people and culture. I have to be interacting, looking at the academic culture of this university. I've learned so much about Native culture and made quite a lot of friendships. It's going to be really hard to leave in two weeks.

Ian thought that another major benefit to him of the aboriginal student exchange program was that he saw things so much more clearly back home because basically they were in "similar circumstances, very different, but similar" and;

> we learn from these things. I mean you don't learn in a formal sense, but informally. My greatest learning on this exchange so far has been on informal situations like the discussions about the Student Ambassador Program which I had with [name].

Ian also said that it was good for him to be in Canada sharing and learning. He felt that he had certain obligations to people back home, that he respected the people here, and that the whole idea was of one indigenous culture sharing with another.

> It's like when you go to someone's house you take off your shoes, speak when you're spoken to and adapt yourself to their ways. It's the same coming into another country, another culture, you have to respect the people of that land and while we have certain obligations to our people back home, when we come here we have to make it easy for the next people and I think that should be one of the stipulations, that we are obligated to the Native people here and to our people back home. When you think about it, many of our people have died to get us this opportunity and we have to make the most of it and make it easy for our next generation, or the next people to come.

Ian said that he felt that the relationships he was forming on the exchange were deeper than "just the professional level." He liked to think that he was establishing friendships that were ongoing. He said, "When I get back to Australia, one of the things that I have to do is to have an exhibition that's going to be related to this exchange." He wanted to give lectures and talks on the exchange and the conditions in

Canada and on the university and the aboriginal people, together with displaying and discussing some of the art from this area. Ian explained that his exhibition would be mainly coming from "inside himself," but at the same time he had interacted with the community and met a lot of young people. He had received gifts from them and part of his exhibition would incorporate the gifts that he had been given.

Ian's exhibition art would mainly be completed following his return to Australia. "I will take one or two pieces home but at the same time I have given pieces to different people here." When asked if it had been productive for him in Canada, Ian said:

> university work - it hasn't really been my work because of the differences in approaches mainly, because here it's a lot more formal. The pattern is a lot more conservative than my art pattern back home so what I have been doing is more or less projects. I have been conforming to expectations but at the same time they have some really good technicians who are actually involved, and I've been learning how to do things so that - so whereas back home you are working in a totally different conceptual level, here it's conceptual but it's also technical. Here each of the professors seems to have a certain view as well.

Ian felt there was a certain amount of racism at the university and commented in relation to the art faculty.

> It's very much the same at home. I really came here with no expectations and I didn't want to have any preconceptions about the university but when I got here I really thought there would be more aboriginal students. The fact that there is not shows the attitude of that particular faculty towards Native work.

He thought many people still perceived aboriginal art as ethnocentric.

> Native art is perceived as being in the past and not as good as the high art from a European background and the faculty members seemed to have a certain favoritism towards the art coming from New York. The art from the United States totally misses the art of Canada and I think that is one of the sad things, being here and seeing that. It is also missed back home but slowly we are making steps to understand. There are individuals here who want to embrace the

> Native culture but many of them are just ignorant men. I have covered racism by the fact that there's no real representation, there's not one course that is run by the art department that really deals with aboriginal Native art. There is one but it's not run by the art department at all. It is called Contemporary Native Artists and that's run by Native studies, and certainly that situation needs to be questioned. Talking back home they run at least two or three - there's one course called Koori culture where they have aboriginal artists come in and speak.

Ian said that there were seven aboriginals at the moment studying fine arts; one was completing a Master of Fine Arts degree, one was working on a Master of Arts degree, and Ian and another girl would be graduating at the end of this year. He felt that the fact that there were only seven Native fine arts students on the campus was no reflection at all on the students or the number of aboriginal people; it was reflection on the department and of the institution. Ian felt that artists prided themselves as being open minded. However, in his opinion, the general attitude towards Native art certainly did not reflect this. It was not fully disapproval, he felt, but an ignorance or a lack of value being placed on aboriginal art.

Ian pointed out that there were no aboriginal faculty members in his university in Australia, but a non-aboriginal person ran a course covering aspects of aboriginal art.

> That was "outsiders looking in," and he has been there for quite some time but when he was away on holiday an aboriginal person taught the course. It was still outside looking in, because it was being taught to non-aboriginal students, but at the same time the person who is teaching it had a certain approach and a certain way of articulating.

Ian thought that there was more than one art history; there was more than European art history and that one of these histories was not "better or worse or higher or lower than the other." He felt that incorporating some aboriginal philosophies into learning might be an improvement. Ian said on exams:

> I don't do exams. Don't have time. I'm not talking about continuous assessment for everything at home but more or less the history, the theory part of it. In the history part they say exams are not really conducive to the creative process but yet we have to hand in papers.

He was making the point that in Australia, students didn't do exams in art, but they did in Canada.

Ian thought that the Student Ambassador Program, organized by Native Students Services was the most important and successful in achieving the goals of the university's policy on aboriginal students. He thought that the students should visit the communities, not once, but as many times as was necessary and make it a personal approach, talking to individuals as well as groups. He suggested that spending a whole day at schools would be useful.

> We had lunch with some of the students when I went there and made them aware of the support that is here. The role I played was more a cultural thing. I did speak but only to say that the situation there is not isolated from across the other side of the world and we, like you, have been put on missions or reserves and people from different areas and we find it hard to get out of the rut and the odds are stacked against us. At the university I told the kids to just try to get some self worth and told them that it was hard for me and many other aboriginal people out there at university because in many ways our culture is in total contrast to what's being offered here. So for us to succeed, I feel that we have to be twice as good as a non-aboriginal person in this institution.

Ian thought that Native culture was embraced more in Canada than in Australia, and that there were so many different reasons for that. The histories were different to begin with, and in Australia the nature of the Native culture was different.

> We are in Cree country here but there are many different Crees and Cree people - quite a large area from my understanding and as a people are more united. The nature of our history is that we were

> so many different little nations and right from the start we weren't really recognized as human beings and it was such a strong campaign of genocide that was attempted on the people that wiped out all the traditional people right down the South and almost right up to the North. This was the result of germ warfare and the reserve system to get people from different areas, different tribal groups and then put them in one area. On the reserves and missions in Australia there are different tribes and groups who are controlled by the Queensland Government.

He was of the opinion that Australia was still an extremely racist country and had never recognized aboriginals or their history. He gave the example of the land claim in Northern Queensland where an aboriginal won title to an island and this set a precedent that "aboriginal people were in Australia before there was legislation or colonization." Ian said that this was a major victory for the aboriginal people but that it had an adverse effect on the racist problem as a whole.

According to Ian, each group of migrants coming to Australia managed to get its foothold in society but at the same time the aboriginal people remained at the bottom. He was looking forward to the time when the aboriginals would be able to claim what he felt was rightfully theirs. Ian said that he thought the same sort of thing applied in Canada and mentioned the large proportion of Native people in Canadian prisons as being similar to the Australian experience.

Ian went on to say that he thought there should be more recognition of the aboriginals as a sovereign people and that their history in the country should be acknowledged. He pointed out that there were no treaties in Australia, in comparison to the Canadian situation. Ian also said that in Australia there is less complexity in the definition of who is a Native as compared with the Canadian situation.

> You are either an aboriginal or you aren't. That has its loopholes as well because an aboriginal person doesn't have to prove he is an aboriginal, he just has to say he is.

Ian thought that, in Australia, there were more disadvantages than advantages in being an aboriginal. There were aboriginal grants, and there was access to education through special entry but, on the whole, he felt that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages.

Ian felt that aboriginals had difficulty in being accepted. As an example, Ian said that there was an art movement that started in Australia in the western desert which made quite an impact in Europe and the United States. Australia was not impressed and, in Ian's view, the aboriginal people had to go to "outsiders" to advance themselves. He felt that this may be a useful way of gaining acceptance more generally.

> We would have to be in control; we do the art and there's a certain message in it. You'd be amazed how much would infiltrate, not on a conscious level but subconsciously. What I'm saying here is that we may have to go outside and that's what's happening here.

Ian concluded by saying that there were many variables relating to the experiences of aboriginal people. In his view, society should look at each of those variables to see what could be done. He felt that his being at the Canadian university had allowed him to compare conditions facing aboriginal people in both Australia and Canada. There were differences, but he felt that the Australian aboriginals were forming a base from which to improve their situation. There were also similarities relating the experiences of Native people in Canada and the United States with aboriginal people in New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and other places. Ian ended by saying that this was just a beginning.

Judy

Judy was a Native student at the university at the time of the interview. She expressed an interest in the university's measures aimed at improving aboriginal student participation and academic persistence.

In terms of the Transition Year Program (TYP), Judy thought it had been a good initiative. She thought the initiatives involving quotas and special programs were also beneficial.

> There's that perception amongst many people in the university or other people I've come across that they feel that if you're here it's because you are fulfilling a quota or because you've gone through a special program like TYP, and people have this perception that aboriginal people can't make it on merit, and I went directly to faculty, and a lot of us have gone directly to faculty, and I didn't get in on a quota basis either! There are those people out there who are accessing it just coming out of high school. I'm not really familiar with the quota or TYP and I can't really speak on that. The outreach I think is critical. The reason for this is that for someone, even to get to the point where they are considering entering university in this province, they've gone through 12 years of a system that's geared towards weeding them out. I say this because of my high school, where to my knowledge, I was the first to get my matriculation and being an aboriginal student.

Judy said that her high school was in the northern part of the province. It was a very small high school and she graduated in 1985. The school had the largest graduating class that year and local people had been thrilled. The school was about 80 years old, and a lot of the aboriginal students were streamed into the diploma programs so at the

> high school and junior high school level there was the perception in the minds of the educators that these people weren't academically oriented and that they weren't academically capable.

Judy said that Native students were "shunted" into these different programs and not encouraged to go on academically. What made the difference for Judy was that she had a very strong family support system and that her parents said "You're getting an education and that's it."

Judy felt that her parents' efforts complemented the school work, and that she and her siblings were "taught how to learn and not just regurgitate but actually think." She indicated that her parents were very supportive of education and always attended parent/teacher interviews and sports days. If there were problems at school, her parents would visit the principal and say, "Hey, you'd better do something about it because we're not tolerating that."

Judy felt that this support was quite difficult for her parents because they were one of the few aboriginal families in the community in which she lived. It made her sad that a lot of school level Native students weren't encouraged.

> The blow to your self esteem when you're told that you can't accomplish it hits you and when you're a teenager and going through everything that teenagers go through it is very difficult to cope with. If you have a family situation where unfortunately aboriginal people have, for the most part they had a lower social and economic level so when you're in the school that's feeding you these images in your textbook about what normal is and you look at your family you say 'well gee, that's not my family, I'm not normal, I'm abnormal.' I mean you don't feel that you have a right to be there so overtly. It's not implicitly communicated but it's picked upon and people drop out and that's really sad. Those who make it to the point where they can get into university are survivors.

Judy thought that there was a status quo in the education system striving to maintain itself, and that people such as she were coming along to shake up the system, forcing those involved to re-evaluate. She thought there was a vested interest in people maintaining that status quo because they were afraid of losing their jobs.

Judy left school but didn't go directly to university. She indicated that she came to the university more than ten years ago. She went into the Faculty of Education because she wanted to get a degree, and she liked teaching; however, when she got there she decided that she wanted to do music and that university was not the place for her. She left but said that it wasn't because of any pressure she felt. Judy indicated that she was doing well academically at the time she left. She went to work for a while, went to school, then went out into the work force and traveled across Canada during the summer and did other courses at different institutions. When she returned to university several years later, she found it quite difficult being older than the other students. As Judy put it, she was in a class of people who "didn't know anything that happened in 1970" and she wondered what she was doing there.

Judy felt that the Aboriginal Students' Council and the aboriginal student lounge were important and made things easier for her. She felt that there was somewhere she could go and feel that she belonged and that produced a sense of community which was also valuable.

> To the aboriginal people in general that sense of community is very important in keeping us here because after you've gone through 12 years of this system, that has perceptions of norms and that perception is a white, male, Christian, able bodied male class of people, so there's so many different marginalizations that are happening to our people getting to classes. We have textbooks that call certain groups Eskimos, so you have to read that and it's great, but it's hard to come across this and think "well, gee, I'm supposed to be getting educated here but this stuff is out of date: these educators need to be educated."

Judy went on to discuss the use of language.

> An example for me was in linguistics when we were talking about the different languages and they said "for example there's animacy and inanimacy" although sometimes these things don't describe what we perceive normally - for example a pipe is referred to as an inanimate object. Maybe it's because we call cars "she." Maybe it's along that line and again putting that Eurocentric application to putting something in a little box, a little definition, and I just got so infuriated, while sitting there, that I thought "does it ever occur to people that there is a separate world here and

> it's just a different way of looking at things," and I know there are different ways of looking at things, but even when people try to look at things differently they are still bringing in those biases and trying to fit them on the differences, rather than say "Hey, this is us and there's this other world here and let's find out what that world is?"

On another topic, Judy said that she hadn't used a lot of the facilities offered by Native Student Services because she felt that it didn't "provide her with anything." She wondered whether other people might have referred to a situation that happened last year when there was a protest by aboriginal students on campus against a non-Native person being confirmed from acting director to director of Native Student Services. She said that she got involved in the dispute on a matter of principle, not personalities, and she thought that this university is saying "you'll come here and spend lots of money, but you can't work here if you're a Native."

> The prices they charge for books and tuition is very high so we're putting a lot directly, or our communities are putting a lot of money towards us getting that education, but the message is to come here, pay your money, get your degrees and help us fill our quotas so that we can say that we are putting aboriginal people through the system, but don't think you are going to work here and one of the arguments that was used by the former dean in terms of our situation is that he's saying "Well, of the x number of people who are in Native Student Services, x number are aboriginal."

Judy felt that the point was "Who has the control? Who has the power? Who has the final say? Who can veto any opinion of those people? - a non-aboriginal."

Judy explained that the unit's previous director had been a non-aboriginal. She had been of German background, "obviously European," but prior to that there had been aboriginal people in that position and Judy thought it was integral to the success of that organization to have an aboriginal director. As a student, Judy wanted to talk to someone who understood what she had gone through. There would have been an implicit understanding and feeling of camaraderie with a Native person in that position of responsibility. Furthermore, Judy felt that it would have given her more determination as a student having that person as a role model who had "beaten the system." Judy felt this would have kept her motivated whereas if she went into a place and didn't see an aboriginal in power, then the implicit message was "Hey, you're not good enough" and the reason for her protest was that she thought they were good enough.

Judy said that she wasn't really happy when the position was confirmed but felt that there was nothing to be done. Although she felt personally about the issue she was really protesting as a member of the Aboriginal Student Council.

With regard to the former dean, Judy said that in negotiations, "if you could call it that with him," she had stated her view that when she walked into Native Student Services she wanted to talk to the director and know that he or she was somebody who had an implicit understanding of what she had gone through to be there, and his response was "Judy, you shouldn't be talking to the director. That's not the access route." Judy had said that that might be the way in his society but it's not her way and she could go to see anyone she chose. Judy believed that the dean had wanted to know what she was feeling; she had told him but felt she had met a paternalistic attitude which she characterized as "How dare you think you can go to the top?" She felt that, because she was a student, the dean thought she didn't have the right to talk to or even expect to be treated as an equal by a director. Although she was a student now, Judy said that it wouldn't always be so.

> I'm going to be a doctor you know, I'm going to have my Ph.D. so I'm going to be Dr.[name] in about six years or so, so I want someone to give me that respect.

Judy said that she had not met or dealt with the new acting dean.

Judy said that she wasn't "too keen" on Native Student Services because she was more self sufficient than most aboriginal students. She had strong family support and could attend to most of her problems herself; otherwise, she could find someone to help. She knew the new faculty student advisor in Native Student Services, and was quite confident in his abilities to help out so, on reflection, she wouldn't say she wasn't keen on the services, she just hadn't felt the need to use them herself.

With regard to the quotas, Judy said she thought they were important because the five per cent target for aboriginal student participation on campus was supposed to reflect the fact that five per cent of the population in the province was aboriginal. However, she didn't know whether the policy was working as she hadn't seen any reports and would like to know if the quotas were, in fact, being met. She had no idea what steps were being taken to meet those quotas.

In terms of the Student Ambassador Program, Judy said it was generally aboriginal people who were making the presentations to potential students. She thought that when the program started it was good because it was Native people talking to "their own," but

> in the other respect there could be an interpretation that it was more of a personal thing and maybe the university could be questioned as to whether they were really serious about it.

Judy felt that the initiative wasn't "really" funded by the university. "If they were saying that they want these quotas - where is the base funding?" Judy said she thought that the biggest single problem was

> lack of respect for the fact that we are a distinct community and there is still an assimilationist mentality out there and there's this perception that if you want to succeed you'd better assimilate and leave behind whatever views you have and conform. There doesn't seem to be the recognition of the fact that people can still go through this system and maintain their role, not only that, but change their perceptions so that by bringing in different ways of looking at things you can enrich everybody's educational experience.

Although better assimilation of Native students was one of the aims of the university's policy, Judy didn't think that it was happening, although there had been partial success in access and participation because these had increased and retention rates had improved.

With regard to situations in which she had been involved, one personal example was when she was in drama class and had to do an impromptu exercise. In the sketch, two people were playing the same person, and they would alternate questions and answers from the class, who also played roles. The two students answered questions alternately; the idea was to encourage team building by role playing. However, Judy had been uncomfortable during the exercise.

> One person who was studying to be a teacher, which made my mind work even more - aggravating about this person, adopted a persona of someone who was retarded and who was from a low social and economic background, someone who had a disability which could have been something really very poignant and very sad, because what could have happened is that she was saying that "I am looking for a little bit of what you're bringing" and what was coming across was a mockery.

Judy said everyone has dreams and everyone needs validation. People posed questions such as "what's your name," and when the answer was a Cree name, they asked "what's your family like?" Judy felt that they were trying to reveal negative aspects and she was disturbed because she thought that it was unnecessary to highlight racial weaknesses such as drinking in this situation. She couldn't believe that these stereotypes were still being perpetuated, and that this person asking the questions was in her final year and that "she was going to go out there teaching with those negative assumptions and influencing all these young minds."

Judy said that to prevent racism, "things had to work on different levels." Five or six years ago, she felt that people wouldn't have been offended on her behalf or maybe wouldn't have cared that she was being harassed. Now there were people who realized that this wasn't right and who came up to her and said, "Are you OK?" That really meant a lot to Judy, and she felt that things really were changing.

Judy had views on the perceptions of aboriginal people in the media: she felt that there was a lot of stereotyping still going on and that the image of the noble savage or the ignorant drunk remained. She felt that these perceptions were out there but that they were one-dimensional and false. However, Judy had noticed changes. For example, non-aboriginal students were taking associate memberships in the Aboriginal Students' Council and were taking Native studies courses because they worked with aboriginal people and wanted an understanding of Native culture and heritage.

Judy hadn't had any problems with faculty members or other instructors at the university, and felt that she was able to go and talk to the professor of the drama course she had mentioned and say, "Hey, I didn't appreciate this." In "a perverse kind of way" she felt that it had worked out well for her because she had to give a presentation later in the course. She had thought "I'll show you" and felt that she performed very well.

Judy said that she had had a very good experience at university but felt that that may have been because she "didn't look like a Native." She felt that when a professor looked at her, he wasn't going to think, "Oh, I've got an aboriginal person in my class" but when she mentioned something relating to her aboriginal background in class "there was this little light that went on" and the professor would think, "Oh, my gosh" and students and professor would start looking and thinking that "she does have high cheekbones and she does have long hair."

When this happened, Judy felt a change of attitude around her, and although she didn't conform to the image that she felt the others in the class now had of her, and she wasn't singled out, she felt somewhat uncomfortable. Judy didn't know if it was easier for her with her more European looks. She felt that she didn't get the blatant, overt discrimination, but she did get discrimination "when I do bring things to people's attention. It's usually because they've made some stupid, racist, ignorant remark," and she had to deal with the fact that people didn't like to be told this. Also, she speculated that people thought that she had deceived them in some way by not letting them know she was aboriginal. Judy said that she had declared herself as "Native" on the university entrance form, and that not all aboriginal students had done this. Judy thought that identification on the entrance form was unimportant to aboriginals. What was important to them was that they were going to get an education, and she argued that race shouldn't matter. She felt that, ideally, she shouldn't have to sign a form to say

> I'm an Indian. I'm a person, and that's the way I look at it, but maybe it's not important to them. They know who they are and they don't need to sign a little form here to prove it.

She made the point that "the university" cared about who was aboriginal because of the quota system and achieving the five per cent goal. However, she was unsure of the commitment towards ensuring that the aboriginal students in this "five per cent" group completed their programs.

With regard to providing the university community with an awareness and sensitivity in dealing with Native students, who were in a "different world" at university, Judy returned to her comment that the onus was on individuals. She felt that people had to realize that "they were not operating in a vacuum." She didn't think that there was any formal policy for university instructors to have cross-cultural training. In any case, she felt that this was not the solution. She believed that individual instructors had the responsibility to make themselves aware of the different students

> who are maybe spewing this information, and the objective just seems to be, just spew this information out, have them regurgitate it, mark the exams and there you go, you've done a good job.

Judy didn't know what happened to course evaluation forms and wondered if anybody ever read them. She thought that the marks on the forms were unimportant. In her view, the reverse side of the form, which allowed comments, was really important. However, she felt that many students didn't take the time to write comments. Judy felt that if one person made a negative comment, it took a lot of courage and sometimes people "just let it go - it'll all come out in the wash." Judy said that if only one student from a class of two hundred made a negative comment, the instructor would think, "Oh well, that's not important." However, she thought that it should be looked at from the viewpoint that "Hey, one person has a problem."

On a different topic, Judy said that it was inspiring to see her own people achieve, especially when there was a general feeling in society that Native people couldn't succeed.

> So the more people who are going through, and these people tend to go back to their communities, so the main difference is that they go back and say that they had done it and you can do it too, so that inspires a lot of people and the effect will take years.

Judy went on to say that the reason she came to university after working was that

> I got tired of working for people who I thought were real idiots but because they had a piece of paper with a couple of initials behind their last name they were deemed to be intelligent and smart and able to manage and all sorts of other wonderful stuff.

She felt that this society really put a value on academic knowledge, so she would get a piece of paper and be able to confront biased individuals in the "dominant society" and say, "Hi, here I am, and I just want to blow your low conceptions of aboriginal people all to hell."

Judy felt that qualifications would enhance her employability which had been limited before because she had gone as far as she could without having a degree. She wanted to go back to her high school and say, "Hey guys, I made it." She hoped that this would prove that success was possible for Natives despite apparent lack of encouragement from the teachers. Judy said that the attitude of some of the teachers spurred her on. Her philosophy was "You can't control what you doubt, but what you can control is how you deal with it." She felt that this was a subversive type of attitude, but smiled when saying so.

Regarding initiatives such as support groups and Native Student Services, Judy felt that what worked for her would not necessarily work for someone else. She thought that a combination of different factors was important. For example, she felt that it was very important to have role models if possible. To her, that was most important because

> you could have all the policies in the world, you could have all the organizations in the world, but until you actually saw the end result, a person who has gone through and made it - well he did it, I can do it.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis of data

The final draft (1990) of the university's Aboriginal Student Policy (Appendix 4) contains two general goals and twelve objectives which contain actions and methods by which the goals can be achieved. The objectives are more detailed than the goals and indicate specific actions to be carried out. This chapter examines what the respondents said in relation to the objectives and addresses the main research questions:

1. what policy measures have been taken to improve aboriginal participation and academic persistence in the selected university; and
2. how successful have these measures been in increasing aboriginal participation and academic persistence, from the viewpoint of the stakeholders?

The chapter addresses also the subsidiary research questions:

3. to what extent have the policy measures been implemented;
4. what is the current rate of aboriginal student participation in various faculties and programs;
5. what are the participation trends over recent years?

General comments on the goals and on other issues raised by interviewees and not addressed by the Aboriginal Student Policy are considered in chapter six, which addresses also the subsidiary questions:

1. do participants have goals other than those expressed in the policy; and

2. which of the steps taken to improve aboriginal student participation and academic persistence have been the most effective?

The first objective in the policy was to inform organizations, bands, schools in the province and in the territory north of the province, of the university's programs and services and to implement a recruitment program for prospective aboriginal students.

The Student Ambassador Program addressed this general objective and was described in detail by Sheila. Sheila was a student at the university and coordinated the program which employed an additional six to eight students to give presentations to the audience groups. She indicated that the program covered approximately 250 schools, bands, communities, and other organizations over the geographical area noted in the objective. Student "ambassadors" visited schools and community centres to make presentations about the university and its programs to prospective aboriginal students.

Sheila was enthusiastic about the program. She said that the information presented to prospective aboriginal students was updated and checked on a regular basis and was, therefore, consistent with information provided by the registrar's office to other groups of potential students. She also indicated that the presenters were trained in the information to be disseminated, that she tested each presenter personally, and that she attended each new presenter's first session. Sheila felt that by being at the first session, she was able to provide reassurance and also monitor the presenter's performance.

Sheila pointed out that the presentations were tailored to suit the age level and the type of group being addressed, and that answering questions formed a large part of each session. She went on to indicate that the program was cost efficient in that some of the student presenters were employed under the university's financial aid program. It was also cost effective in that the program was funded partly by the communities and schools which received visits.

The success of the program was corroborated by Ian, an aboriginal exchange student from Australia. He said that the aboriginal representation at universities in Australia was well below the proportion of aboriginals in the whole population. He felt that there should be a program similar to the Student Ambassador Program operating at the Canadian university, where students go out to recruit Native people and encourage them to participate in university programs.

Ian felt that the Student Ambassador Program was the most important element of the Aboriginal Student Policy. He had accompanied a presenter on a school presentation and felt that a key factor in the program's success was having current aboriginal university students as role models for the prospective students. He suggested that the school visits could be made even more effective by having the presenter spend the full day interacting informally with prospective students, and by visiting each school more than once during the year.

Kenneth, an aboriginal student at the university who had entered his program several years earlier did not mention the program, but indicated how much role models had affected his decision to attend university.

Rhonda, a fine arts student at the university and president of the Aboriginal Students' Council, also pointed out that the role modeling aspect of the Student Ambassador Program was important and that the real power of the program was that "what the [prospective] students are seeing are their own kind who are successful."

Rhonda also felt that the Student Ambassador Program was of considerable benefit to the student presenters who earned seven or eight dollars per hour and also gained valuable experience. Ian made a similar point when he said that his school visit and discussions with the students and with the coordinator were some of the most valuable experiences of his exchange visit.

Fred, a student services officer in the Office of Native Student Services, and coordinator for aboriginal students attending programs in the various university faculties, also felt that hiring aboriginals to go out into aboriginal communities was very appropriate.

Gary, coordinator of the program aimed at increasing the participation and success of aboriginal students in the law faculty, also discussed the Student Ambassador Program and the fact that he coordinated a similar program also aimed at fulfilling the same policy objective. However, his program was aimed at increasing aboriginal participation in programs in the law faculty. He pointed out that his funding for recruitment was being reduced but that the Student Ambassador Program was insufficient to fill the gap completely. This is because Gary concentrated his recruitment on current aboriginal university students, whereas the Student Ambassador Program concentrated on attracting aboriginal students to the university for initial qualifications.

Lara, the Native Student Services director, felt that aboriginal student participation was greatly increased which would indicate that programs such as the Student Ambassador Program were having success. In Lara's view, now that aboriginal student participation was improved, the biggest challenge facing the unit was improving aboriginal student academic persistence.

Although the Student Ambassador Program clearly addresses the objective of informing aboriginal organizations, bands, and schools about the university and its programs directly and appears to be successful and appreciated by schools and organizations which contribute funding to allow the visits, the lack of base funding for the program caused some respondents to question the commitment of the university to this objective. Judy, an aboriginal student at the university, was aware of the Student Ambassador Program and said it was generally aboriginal people who were making the presentations to potential students. She thought that when the program started it was good because it was Native people talking to "their own," but that this relatively low level and under-funded approach may be misinterpreted.

> There could be an interpretation that it was more of a personal thing and maybe the university could be questioned as to whether they were really serious about it.

The fact that several of the administrators and students who had not been involved directly with the Student Ambassador Program didn't mention it when asked about programs aimed at increasing aboriginal student participation may mean that the program was fulfilling its objectives but that it was not a fundamental determiner as to whether prospective students go on to attend the university. For example, none of the University and College Entrance Program (UCEP) students attending the neighbouring vocational college, who were all aboriginal students aiming to attend further post-secondary programs, mentioned the Student Ambassador Program.

One of the UCEP students, Noreen, made this point by indicating that advertising in the media might be the best way to disseminate information about courses, and that this was how she had learned of the UCEP she was attending. If the program had been a major determiner as to whether they attended university, the students would probably have mentioned it. However, the Student Ambassador Program was set up in 1990, which might mean that those students were not attending school at that time and consequently did not attend presentations.

Alan, a senior university administrator with responsibility for student services, including Native student services, did not mention the Student Ambassador Program, but he did think that there should be a liaison officer. The liaison program is the type of program he expected to see funded since one of the goals of the policy was to increase aboriginal student participation. In Alan's view, the liaison function would facilitate the creation of new programs for aboriginal students, and would also help in the university's contact with aboriginal communities on research related issues. Alan felt that Native Student Services was being asked to perform these functions and that this created a strain on the resources. He had instigated a research project over the previous summer which examined the need for a funded liaison function and concluded that some opportunities to improve contact between the university and aboriginal groups were lost because of the lack of a suitable liaison function for the university.

The second objective was to offer a one year credit program for aboriginal students, the Transition Year Program (TYP) which may qualify them for admission to faculties at the university.

Many of the participants mentioned the TYP as one of the effective ways in which aboriginal student participation has been increased. Rhonda mentioned it as one of the most important initiatives and felt that it was one of the main reasons for increasing aboriginal student participation. She felt that more Native students were entering the university both through the TYP and directly to faculties, and that this was having an important positive effect on the lives of aboriginal people generally, and in the quality of their lives.

Noreen, a UCEP student at the local vocational college, planning to enter the university in the forthcoming academic year, also mentioned the TYP as one of the most successful programs. She felt that although she wasn't going to attend the TYP herself, but would be entering a faculty directly, she would be able to use the TYP as a lifeline. It is more likely that Noreen would be using Native Student Services for support and the fact that she would think of the TYP as providing support to faculty aboriginal students suggests that she is thinking of the TYP and the Native Student services as one entity.

Noreen went on to say that the TYP was aimed at easing the progress of aboriginal students into university life and programs. However, having had pre-admission counseling and information sessions, she felt there was a certain amount of discrimination as regards entrance to the TYP with certain students being "discriminated against" on the basis of how "Native they were." Noreen was questioned further on this issue but would say nothing more detailed on the record. She simply reiterated that she felt that entry should be based on strict rules and that prospective students should not be discriminated against on the basis of whether they were Metis or dependent on the band they came from.

Quincey, a UCEP student, also thought the TYP was fulfilling its function of facilitating the entry of aboriginal students into university. He mentioned the importance of building pride and self confidence, of "walking before you run," and that this was particularly important for students such as he who had not graduated from high school and who were completing upgrading prior to university entrance.

Another UCEP student, Peter, also mentioned the TYP, but he emphasized the fact that it reflected a drop in entrance requirements for Native students. He felt that the TYP was a mixed blessing because it made aboriginal students compete with each other to enter university. He wished that the aboriginal students' academic qualifications were as good as those of other students so that it would not be necessary to compete for places in the TYP or in the set-aside seats in faculties. Peter felt that the TYP should be set up to encourage Native students to help each other with academic problems, but if that were not successful then tutors should be hired to give support.

Peter was concerned also that entering university via the TYP would lead to other students looking down on him, since they would think it a "soft route." Further, he was concerned that completion of the TYP may not lead to a faculty place. Peter indicated that he would not be entering the TYP himself; despite this, however, he felt it was a good program.

UCEP student James also mentioned the TYP and felt that the important benefit it offered aboriginal students was a way of "cutting red tape" to allow university access. In interviews with Native Student Services, James had gained the favourable impression that there would be support for him should he run into problems and that equivalent support was not available to other students at the university. James stressed the link between programs such as the UCEP and the TYP. In his view, together they opened up a practical route to university entrance for non-matriculated aboriginal students. In his case, being 35 years old, it would have been impractical to spend up to three years in upgrading prior to entering a lengthy university program.

Alan mentioned the TYP as one of the three major initiatives aimed at increasing aboriginal student participation and academic persistence at the university. He mentioned the policy itself and Native Student Services as the other two important elements. Alan felt that the TYP was one of the finest aboriginal student access programs in western Canada. The TYP offered good assessment of candidates, entrance into an unclassified year of studies, followed by a guaranteed entry to the faculty of choice on satisfactory completion of the year. Alan felt that the TYP, with the support services offered through Native Student Services, was designed to improve academic persistence, and that it had been extremely successful in this aim.

Alan felt that the TYP helped aboriginal student academic persistence; however he felt also that the fact that the program was in place and that aboriginal students were successful was also an encouragement to participation at the university. As evidence for this proposal, he pointed to the increased numbers of aboriginal students in the program, from about ten or eleven students ten years ago to about 80 now. In Alan's view, another measure of success was that approximately

70% of last year's TYP students were currently enrolled in faculties continuing their programs.

Alan argued that since the TYP had grown considerably over the years, it was time for it to be fully recognized by the university and funded in relation to its current status.

Alice thought that the TYP had grown and was successful and, because of it, many aboriginal students were entering programs other than Native studies on completion of the TYP. Alice indicated that the TYP was designed to "bring aboriginal students up to speed," but, making the same point as UCEP student Peter, also indicated that many aboriginal students she knew were uneasy that the TYP was seen as an easy way in for aboriginal students who were not sufficiently well qualified to enter the university directly.

Beth indicated that the TYP was set up by Native Student Services, that it had been successful over a number of years, that aboriginal students could complete three courses instead of five, and that this constituted a full load for them. Beth pointed out that the TYP students were provided with emotional or personal support as necessary, and that student numbers had grown to about 80 this year compared with only about 20 two years previously.

In Beth's view, the large influx of aboriginal students over the last two years meant that there were considerably more aboriginal students in the university in the first two years of their programs than in the last two. This might lead to the view that many aboriginal students had left university in their third and fourth years, before completing their programs. Beth felt that this was possibly not the case, and that in another two years or so the picture would probably be better. Beth also mentioned that aboriginal students were going into a wider range of faculties now, including engineering, science, and the professional faculties.

Dan mentioned that there were 73 students in the TYP, and although he did not know how many qualified students had failed to gain entrance - he assumed there were some. Dan felt that the TYP was a very successful and desirable program.

Fred felt that the TYP was working exceptionally well. He was responsible for providing support to aboriginal students in faculties on campus, but, at the time of the interview, he was also working with a particular TYP student who was having problems. Analyzing the importance of support given to students, Fred had a pragmatic view of whether the assistance he gave was the determining factor in whether the student completed her program. In his view, a variety of other factors also came into play. However, he felt that the TYP was instrumental in improving both participation and persistence.

Sheila had been a TYP student, and she knew of many mature aboriginal students who entered university by that route, although she felt that many more aboriginals were now entering university direct from high schools. Sheila was very positive about the TYP and said that, through it, she had become involved in other organizations such as the Student Ambassador Program (which she coordinated), the Aboriginal Students' Council, and the School of Native Studies. Sheila had felt exceptionally welcome during her time in the TYP and had been involved in many activities. For example, she had participated in the international exchange program for aboriginal students and had visited Australia to study.

Lara pointed out that the TYP allowed aboriginal students to enter one of eight faculties on successful completion of the program.

To be accepted to the program, students had to meet the minimum admission requirements which were equivalent to the requirements for mature entry. Lara pointed out that the dropout rate was very low for the TYP, with well above 80% of students completing the program successfully. However the dropout rate increased significantly when the aboriginal students entered the faculties. Lara felt that this was one of the biggest challenges facing her unit at the present. It was much more difficult to provide support to students when they were spread across eight different faculties, although the unit did have a coordinator, Fred, to assist these students. However, through providing access to the different faculties, the TYP was opening up several new university routes for Native students.

Lara believed that the first year in a new environment was challenging for the students. She felt that the TYP helped students overcome some of these challenges. She felt that the high completion rate supported this notion. Lara mentioned that, in the current year, Native Student Services had dealt with more than 2 000 enquiries from prospective students. The university had received 197 applications for 80 positions in the TYP.

Kenneth, an aboriginal student studying at the university, mentioned that he had entered the university prior to the formation of the TYP and had been part of the Coordinated University Transition program (CUTS). He indicated that there were only about ten students on the program when he attended. He pointed out, however, that there were many culturally sensitive people involved in the program and that this had encouraged him to continue his studies.

Kenneth indicated that several students had had to drop out of the course because of lack of funding; he estimated that at best there were only about four of the original students left at the end of the program. Speaking about the problems he faced as an aboriginal student entering the Transition Year Program, Kenneth said that he had had some problems in achieving the grades he felt he should have been achieving in the early part of his program. He said that this was a concern because, in the CUTS program, students getting a grade of four or less faced automatic suspension. However, Kenneth persevered and started to achieve better grades thus allowing him to continue in the program.

Malcolm, coordinator of the TYP, felt that the program was successful and that the main reason for this was the support given to students going through the program. He saw no reason to change the program, but on reflection felt that some of the current year's students had not asked for tutorial help early enough. This was a concern for Malcolm at the time of the interview. He indicated that students were now asking for tutors and that it was difficult to find them at short notice.

Malcolm mentioned that screening students was one of the reasons for its success. Lara had mentioned that 197 candidates had applied for the 80 seats in the current year. This indicates that more than half of the applicants are unsuccessful. This statistic may have something to do with Noreen's feeling that the selection process was not totally fair.

Malcolm felt that the TYP students required more support and guidance than those entering faculties directly. He felt that he had more control over the students in his program and that some of the students entering the faculties directly did not use their initiative to get assistance when required, although he had already pointed out that this was also a problem with the TYP students.

Malcolm pointed out that academic persistence was really high in the TYP. For example, in the previous year, from 76 students, only two had dropped out. Malcolm felt that another reason for success on the program was that the TYP hired instructors to teach programs to the aboriginal students. Thus they had smaller class sizes and were able to deal with a class of all Native people. The implication is that there would be more time for individual attention to students needs, and that the instructors would be more likely to conduct courses in a way congruent with the aboriginal students' needs and expectations.

Ian felt that the TYP was valuable, but felt that four years of university for an undergraduate course was long, and that the TYP extended this for most students. He compared this to the norm of three years for undergraduate degrees in Australia.

Judy felt that the TYP was beneficial but didn't like the fact that "these programs" perpetuate the idea that Native people can't make it on merit. She felt strongly about this because she had entered the university on merit herself, but it was sometimes assumed by students and instructors that, as an aboriginal, she must have entered through an easier route.

A third objective was to improve access of aboriginal students to all faculties.

Rhonda mentioned the Native Student Services office, which offered many of the services and facilities outlined in the objective, as one of the main ways in which the university was implementing the Aboriginal Student Policy, and that the higher numbers of aboriginal students attending faculties was an indication of some success.

Several of the students interviewed were currently in faculties - Rhonda was in fine arts and was aware that the quota system for aboriginal students was encouraging access. However, she believed that dentistry and nursing were the only faculties to have met the aboriginal student quotas. She felt the quota system for other faculties was ineffective because there were insufficient aboriginal students to fill the quotas in any case.

Rhonda felt that the entry requirements for faculties was biased against aboriginals because of the second language requirement. She indicated that French was the most common second language offered by students, but that this was not appropriate for her and some other aboriginal students. She felt this was "just learning the other language of our oppressors." She went on to indicate that, if aboriginal students offered a Native language to satisfy the entrance requirement, this was tested by written examination. In her opinion this process was inappropriate since the Native languages were primarily oral in tradition. She felt that it was discriminatory to examine aboriginal languages in a "European manner."

Quincey felt that it was good to have set aside seats in faculties because they did increase access for aboriginal students; however, he didn't like the idea that other students complained about this special treatment for aboriginals.

Noreen was planning to enter the Faculty of Science directly from the UCEP. Both Lara and Alan indicated that it always had been difficult for aboriginal students to enter the science faculty. Lara pointed out that since science was a pre-requisite for medicine, this difficulty also made entering medicine problematic. However, Noreen had discussed the programs with Lara and had been told that she could most probably enter the Faculty of Science and thus continue in her objective to become a doctor. This was a personal example of improved access to faculties.

Peter felt that set-aside seats for aboriginal students were necessary, but that it was somewhat belittling for the students involved. He said that the number of aboriginal students on campus had increased a lot, but was disappointed that not all the set-aside seats were being filled by Native students. He contended that it was a failure that there were insufficient aboriginal students qualified to take these places.

James also thought that the number of aboriginal students on campus had increased which would indicate that, in his perception, more aboriginal students were accessing the faculties.

Alice contended that the university's Aboriginal Student Policy was at least attempting to ensure that all people have access to all faculties.

Alan mentioned that the TYP had increased the numbers of aboriginals in faculties since the numbers of the TYP students had grown dramatically over the years, and a high percentage of these students (70% in the previous year) went on from the TYP to faculties in the university.

Beth felt that the expression of the five per cent target for aboriginal student participation as official university policy was important. She also indicated that the assistance of faculties was essential if this objective were to be realized uniformly across the university. She pointed out that many more aboriginal students were now gaining access to faculties such as the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Science and the professional faculties. This was a broader access than previously where aboriginal students tended to concentrate in the Faculty of Arts.

She also felt that the set-aside seats were important but again indicated that some faculties following the policy were more enthusiastic than others. Beth felt that the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Law were "lighthouses" in terms of their set-aside seats and support offered to aboriginal students. In her view, the School of Native Studies had also been of major importance in attracting Native students to the university, although Beth stressed that a broader participation was now being encouraged.

Dan argued that set-aside seats were the simplest way to achieve the five per cent quota in all faculties. He thought that there had been success in increasing aboriginal student participation but that aboriginals were still underrepresented. He gave the example of the small proportion of female students in some faculties. He felt that not having sufficient qualified aboriginal applicants for all the set-aside places was a problem.

Dan pointed to programs such as the TYP as a means of increasing access to faculties. Dan, of aboriginal heritage himself, felt that the five per cent goal was reasonable. He indicated that the factors affecting access to the university and, therefore, to faculties were broad and that some of these factors resided in other locations. He cited communities and the rest of the education system as also having a great bearing on access.

Ed commented that establishing the School of Native Studies had been an important development in the process to increase aboriginal student participation in the university, but that there had been a real danger that it would become a ghetto, and that aboriginal students would be less likely to access programs such as dentistry, medicine, and law.

He pointed out that the School of Native Studies had never been envisioned as purely for aboriginal students; Native studies had been seen as a legitimate area of academic concern, and there had always been some non-Natives at the school. Also, concurrent with the establishment of the School of Native Studies, Ed mentioned that faculties such as law and medicine had been asking themselves what might be done to increase aboriginal student participation in their programs.

As a recent recruit to the university's staff, Fred felt that the university had made poor progress in encouraging aboriginal access to faculties. He felt that the 500 self-identified aboriginal students currently attending the university were insufficient in a student body he estimated at 40 000. However, he felt that the numbers were increasing and would increase regardless of the university policy.

Fred felt that requiring mature aboriginal students to upgrade meant that the program length they were faced with was too long, and that this was a barrier to participation. He felt that entrance directly to faculties by the non-matriculated student route would help reduce this barrier.

Gary concentrated his comments on the law faculty. His top priority as coordinator of the program for increasing aboriginal student participation in the faculty was recruitment. He indicated that the law faculty had set the quota for aboriginal students at ten per cent - twice the target in the university policy. Although all prospective law students must write the test for law school admission, Gary pointed out that aboriginal students could have other factors such as experience taken into account during admission and that it was hoped that reforms in this area would remove the necessity for a quota in the future.

Lara also stressed the importance of set-aside places for aboriginal students and mentioned medicine with two; pharmacy, dentistry, and dental hygiene with one each; and about 20 in education. She also mentioned the program in the law faculty. Lara had pointed out that the TYP had eight different access routes which allowed students to move into one of eight faculties providing they maintained a grade point average of 5.0 on the stanine system (grade levels one to nine).

Lara mentioned that more aboriginal students were accessing the sciences which allowed them to study medicine. For example, one aboriginal student, Noreen, had been ineligible to enter the Faculty of Science because of a deficiency in chemistry. She therefore had applied to the Faculty of Arts and prior to entering the university would complete the chemistry requirement. This would then allow her to transfer to the Faculty of Science. This example shows the need for flexibility in terms of meeting the requirements, and also the need for pre-admission advice. Lara provided information which indicated that there were aboriginal students in at least seven faculties from the TYP alone (table p. 122).

Malcolm felt that students entering faculties directly usually required less support than those entering the TYP. He also felt that set-aside seats were important and that the faculties should increase the numbers set aside for aboriginal students.

Judy pointed out that many aboriginal students got into faculties directly without using the quota system or without using programs such as the TYP.

As part of the triangulation method, data were obtained from the registrar's office which indicated that the number of aboriginal students on campus who identified themselves as such had increased over recent years from 227 in 1991-92 to 422 in 1992-93 and to 665 in 1993-94, a 66% increase over the period.

A fourth objective of the Aboriginal Student Policy was to increase overall awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in the university community.

The Aboriginal Students' Council (ASC), and Native Student Services were mentioned as ways in which this objective had been addressed. Rhonda felt that the ASC was successful in promoting a community sense in aboriginals, and that non-aboriginals were beginning to become aware.

Rhonda spoke of her advocacy on behalf of the aboriginal students on council - as president of the ASC. One issue in which she had been involved as an advocate and which had raised university community awareness of aboriginal students was the protest and picketing which had followed Lara's confirmation as director of Native Student Services.

Rhonda explained that she was involved in discussions and negotiations with university administrators and that this involvement had culminated in her working with the new director during the summer on the selection of the new Native Student Officer responsible for assisting the Native students in faculties. The whole process also had involved Native elders, and these people also had been involved with university staff, thus increasing awareness of aboriginal issues.

Regarding sensitivity to aboriginal students, Rhonda argued that the issue surrounding the second language necessary for admission to the arts faculty was an example where the university could show more sensitivity to aboriginal students.

Rhonda was one of the aboriginal students to mention that some university instructors had shown insensitivity in dealing with them. For example, one instructor had asked her if she was one of the quota students. This had upset her, although she claimed she "didn't get mad at the time." Also, Rhonda said that her work had been referred to as "primitive and naive" by instructors. She had been told to try to get over her culture, as if it were a handicap to be overcome.

Students had also displayed insensitivity to Rhonda. She recalled students who had commented on the fact that her education was fully funded and that this somehow invalidated any comments Rhonda might have on the processes involved in that education.

Rhonda felt that although individuals in the university setting displayed insensitivity and sometimes prejudice to aboriginal students, she felt that Native Student Services offered real help to aboriginal students experiencing such difficulties. She indicated that if she experienced such problems in the current year she would go there for help. Rhonda said that she had heard of aboriginal students who had left the university because of this lack of sensitivity, although she did not know personally the individuals involved.

Rhonda felt that one possible solution to the problem of insensitivity to aboriginal students would be for the university to establish a forum with all aboriginal post-secondary students in the city. She indicated that this suggestion had been broached by the Aboriginal Student Society (ASC) but that, so far, the university had not acknowledged the need for such round table discussions.

Rhonda pointed out that the ASC had been approached to make a presentation at a campus meeting on multiculturalism. She said that the society had agreed, since it was a way of increasing overall awareness of aboriginal students, but that members of the society had been uncomfortable in being seen as a multicultural group. She argued that aboriginals were a distinct minority "like handicapped people, like women."

Rhonda said that members of the university community had been asking questions such as "where did all these Indians come from?" over the previous year or so. This indicated an increasing general awareness of the aboriginal student body, but said less about the level of sensitivity. Rhonda indicated that her reply to such question was "we've been here a while!"

Noreen, a UCEP student at the nearby vocational college, felt that while incorporation of cultural elements was important for the success of post-secondary programs involving aboriginal students, it was crucial for faculty members to have a tolerance for and understanding of aboriginal people so that they didn't "ridicule their beliefs."

Peter had also spoken to the idea that reserved seats for aboriginal students was "belittling." This point was mentioned by several students whether or not they had gained access to the university by a route specifically for aboriginals. For example, Sheila felt that positive events such as the TYP graduation countered some of the negative reactions aboriginal students were subjected to from other students who made the point that they had entered university by an easier route.

James spoke of how important it was for aboriginal students that staff were not prejudiced. He felt that the UCEP instructors on his current program knew in advance that they would be dealing with classes composed of aboriginal students and would presumably tend to be less prejudiced against Native students because of this.

Alice was aware that aboriginal students, in the main, wanted to enter university in the regular way; they didn't want to be seen as "second class citizens" by entering by some easier route. She felt that aboriginal students wanted a Native perspective on the experience they had at university. This included the teaching, the values and the atmosphere itself. Alice argued that an empathetic approach by university community members would be ideal: "until you walk in our shoes, you can't really understand it."

From her background as a professor in family studies, Alice indicated her own sensitivity to aboriginal students by indicating that the university generally needed to rethink its traditional view of the "Canadian family." In her view, it was no longer appropriate to think of this in the traditional white Anglo-Saxon model. Alice felt that as the proportion of non-traditional university students, including aboriginals, increased there would be a greater sensitivity to all students. She was saddened, however, that there wasn't more mixing between different groups at the present.

Alan mentioned the ASC sponsored Aboriginal Awareness Week on campus, and that he and "others who felt committed to encouraging cultural diversity on campus" attended and enjoyed it. However, he felt that the rest of campus ignored the event. The human rights office had started up a student theatre group which aimed to help in their on-campus education effort on human rights in general. This would include aboriginal issues. Alan argued also that a Native Student Centre would help increase the university community's awareness of aboriginal students, since this would increase the population's visibility.

Regarding sensitivity to aboriginal students, Alan felt that it would be unusual for Canadian non-aboriginal students not to hold stereotypical notions about aboriginal people and their aspirations to take up the professions. He pointed out that expression of these notions creates a racist incident.

He indicated that the university had a number of procedures to deal with such incidents and that these were contained in codes of behaviour and employment agreements. Alan indicated that not all complaints were necessarily valid, and that in some cases the statement of accepted scientific facts could be offensive to aboriginal students. In these cases, Alan felt that there was an opportunity for those involved to learn about putting statements into context and to build on mutual understandings. In the other cases, however, where there was racism, the human rights office aimed to help individuals involved deal with the personal impacts of the incident and to outline the options available for dealing with the issue.

Alan felt that there was a real problem to be faced in overcoming the stereotypes and biases facing the TYP graduates who wanted to enter the sciences area.

Beth felt that the Aboriginal Student Council performed a valuable function in arranging aboriginal cultural events such as round dances. Beth reported attending a round dance and felt that it was wonderful and showed that there was a critical mass of aboriginal students at the university. Also, Beth felt that the School of Native Studies contributed to increasing overall awareness of aboriginal students on campus and that "academic validation" of the type provided there was important in the university setting, perhaps more so for the university population than for the aboriginal students themselves. She made the same point about study of aboriginal languages.

> When you say to somebody "Your language is worth studying; your language is interesting; your language is something we want to know about" that's a very validating thing for a culture.

Another point Beth made about overall awareness of aboriginal students was that the university employed a policy of employment equity. She felt that this was a visible sign from the university that aboriginals, as one of the groups identified in the employment equity policy, were valued as members of the university community. The issue surrounding Lara's appointment as director of Native Student Services indicates that the point is important to aboriginal students.

Dan felt that it was important to be sensitive to students, no matter what their cultural background. He felt that displaying sensitivity in the classroom setting was basically "just good teaching practice." Dan made the point that there was an advantage if teachers shared the background of their students; he felt that when dealing with women, Blacks, or Natives as students it was possible to be empathetic and sensitive, but that there were always areas hidden to those who were not of a particular group. However, he felt that there was a limit to this line of reasoning; for example, he wondered if that meant that only ten year old children could teach ten year olds.

While Ed had had no experience of racism or prejudice being problems, he felt that if aboriginal students perceived it to be a problem, then it was a serious issue to be addressed. Ed felt that the university's central administration's responsibility was to try to create an environment which respected individual members of the university and provided support services which would enhance the creation of such an environment. He felt that seminars dealing with prejudice and racism for instructional staff may be helpful, but pointed out that there was a limit to the extent to which the university could and should control individual instructors.

Fred felt that the structure of the university was important in reflecting the awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students on campus. He felt that the physical separation of the School of Native Studies from the Faculty of Arts was illustrative of a lack of profile for aboriginal issues within the university. He felt that presentations such as aboriginal art displays, fashion shows and pow wows organized by the Aboriginal Student Society helped to raise a general awareness of aboriginal students on campus. However, he felt that raising awareness in an intellectual or cultural sense was more difficult. He felt that there were professors at the university who did not accept the validity of aboriginal societies. He argued that the fifteen minutes he was allotted in the orientation program for new teaching staff at the university to explain aboriginal student programs and services were inadequate. Also, since these orientation programs were voluntary, he felt they were less effective.

In a similar vein, Alan speculated that the orientation programs offered for instructors might be attended largely by new instructors who were already culturally aware since they would tend to find the subject more interesting and relevant.

Fred pointed out that by increasing aboriginal student numbers on campus, which he felt was happening with or without the university's Aboriginal Student Policy, the overall awareness of aboriginal students was being increased. He argued that round table discussions should begin with representation from students at the university and elsewhere in the post-secondary system. He felt that these talks should be general in nature and should discuss programs but also should consider solutions to the other problems facing aboriginal students on campus.

Gary pointed out that a lack of awareness and sensitivity to aboriginal students had been the driving force behind the program he was coordinating to increase aboriginal student participation and success in the law faculty.

In common with Fred, Gary felt that numbers were an important manifestation of awareness. Gary organized retreats for aboriginal students and others to participate in traditional ceremonies. He felt that this validated the aboriginal culture and also opened up some of its learning to non-Natives.

In Gary's experience, there were always one or two students in a class who displayed "more or less overtly discriminatory" behaviour towards aboriginal students. Gary felt that professors were not openly discriminatory but were sometimes indifferent to the problems facing aboriginal students. However he felt that there had been an upsurge in interest over the last year or so, particularly in relation to incorporating aboriginal content into the curriculum. He described the "Perspectives" unit which focused on cross-cultural awareness. He felt that this fostered greater awareness and understanding between Native and non-Native lawyers and prospective lawyers. He argued that this type of experience was especially valuable for the non-aboriginal students and lawyers because many of them would be representing aboriginal clients when they entered the legal profession.

Gary said that the faculty administration was planning to support activities such as cultural camps more actively and indicated that he hired Native people as guest speakers for sessions with both students and faculty members.

Also, Gary mentioned that the Aboriginal Student Law Society, which was affiliated with the ASC, also helped to increase awareness of aboriginal issues.

Gary pointed out that the aggregation of aboriginal students in the law faculty was now a visible group in the faculty and that this had indeed increased awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students. This was similar to Beth's point regarding a critical mass of aboriginal students on campus.

Sheila, as coordinator of the Student Ambassador Program, was involved in raising aboriginal community awareness of the university and of its handling of aboriginal issues. However, she made some points relating to the university community as well. Sheila felt that the support given to her and other students helped counter some of the discrimination she and other aboriginal students sometimes felt on campus.

Also, Sheila mentioned the TYP graduation as an important morale booster to students completing the program as well as to those still involved. The graduation recognized outstanding students in the TYP but, as a publicized event, also tended to increase overall university community awareness of aboriginal issues.

Sheila felt also that the larger numbers of aboriginal students on campus had raised an awareness in the university community, but that sometimes this resulted in negative comments and a perpetuation of what she referred to as myths held about aboriginal people. She argued that these views were de facto stereotyping and were incorrect.

She went on to point out that, when these myths were raised in class, it put aboriginal students in the awkward position of either having to respond on behalf of aboriginal people or of ignoring the comment. She felt that both alternatives were problematic to aboriginal students, and she had pointed out that she knew of some students who had left the university because of such pressures.

Sheila went on to indicate that, paradoxically, sometimes stereotyping comments had a positive effect in that they elicited support from the rest of the class for the aboriginal student point of view. Sheila felt that the discrimination faced by university students was similar, in most cases, to what the students had faced earlier in their lives. She said that discrimination should be faced up to and that it was the choice aboriginal students had to make in the classroom.

However, Sheila went on to indicate that standing up to discrimination was not easy, particularly if an instructor were involved. She felt that there was always the question of the mark to be considered if an aboriginal student debated discrimination with the instructor or students. However, Sheila argued that some kind of aboriginal student awareness class would help instructors.

She said that discrimination seemed worse for aboriginal students than for other minority groups because, of all the racial groups, aboriginals seemed less expected to enter universities.

Sheila indicated that there was a grapevine operating among aboriginal students where information about possible discrimination by instructors would be shared. Also, she felt that a collective approach on the part of aboriginal students would be useful in shedding light on discrimination cases. She argued that a human rights officer should be involved in investigating complaints of discrimination, which she felt should be examined closely since that was one way of ensuring that aboriginal students did not feel obliged to leave the university as a result of such experiences.

Lara pointed out that 31 aboriginals had graduated at the end of the previous year where in the past it was "difficult to think of even one or two." Clearly this must have had an effect on awareness. Lara felt that a major challenge for her unit was to ensure academic persistence. This relates to the notion that aboriginal students may leave the university prematurely if they feel discriminated against. Lara felt that her unit had a role in helping create opportunities for cultural elements to be included in university life. She thought that Native elders could help by working with her staff.

Lara said that she heard about racism from students. She felt that a lot of it was perception, but that there was a real basis for the students' perceptions as well. She said that some members of the university community had not lived in such close proximity with aboriginal students as they did on campus, and that this led to some of the discussions and interactions in class which aboriginal students were upset about.

Lara hoped that a time would come when there were so many aboriginal students at the university, some of them in positions such as lecturers and professors, that these problems no longer arose. She saw the present time as a transitional period with much of the real or perceived racism or prejudice being a function of the changes taking place.

Lara reiterated her idea that aboriginal communities, including the elders, needed to be more closely involved in the university. She saw a partnership among students, the Office of Native Student Services, elders and aboriginal community members as being one way to work on increasing awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students on campus.

In Lara's view, aboriginal student "academic" persistence was not related to academic issues so much as to life issues. However, she did not mention insensitive treatment as a reason for aboriginal students leaving the university before completing their programs.

Kenneth mentioned that he had been subject to stereotyping in his childhood and during his early education. He said that he met many people at the university who were culturally sensitive, although he had attended an anthropology class in which he felt many "strange" ideas about aboriginal people were put forward. Kenneth had enjoyed "exploding myths" in this and other classes where he felt that he had a personal knowledge of the culture and lifestyle being discussed.

He went on to mention one member of the teaching staff whom he felt was racist. He related the example of an instructor who communicated the fact that he was unhappy teaching a Native studies course. Kenneth had spoken to the instructor following an incident in class where a Native student had been involved in an argument with the instructor. The instructor had said he was not going to bother helping the student since she was going to fail or drop out of the course in any case. Kenneth wondered if the argument had coloured the instructor's view.

Another example of insensitive treatment involved observations about aboriginal people made in another Native studies course. Kenneth felt that the treatment was one-sided and didn't take into account aboriginal ideas of spirituality. He also objected to an instructor's demonstration of the fallibility of oral transmission of communications and using this to dismiss oral traditions generally.

Kenneth felt that the student lounge was a visible presence on campus which increased general awareness of aboriginal students, but he also felt that the picketing which had accompanied the Aboriginal Student Council's protest against Lara's confirmation as director of Native Student Services had also raised the profile of aboriginal students. However, during this process the aboriginal students had met with negative comments from other members of the university community.

Malcolm felt that a lot of "so-called" racial insensitivity was really "just ignorance" on the part of instructors. For example, he mentioned that, whereas making eye contact was normal in white society, it was looked on differently in aboriginal communities. Younger people would be showing defiance if engaging in eye contact with older people such as teachers. Teachers not understanding this would tell aboriginal children to "look at me when I'm talking to you" when they were showing respect by avoiding eye contact.

Malcolm thought that similar incidents would also happen at the university level, and that teachers and instructors should be sympathetic to the needs of aboriginal students and that this should include an awareness of lack of resources such as libraries when outreach programs were offered in aboriginal communities.

Ian indicated that more sensitivity should be shown to aboriginal students in terms of the language requirement for the arts faculty. He had heard that French was a requirement and felt that this was "ridiculous" if true. He argued that the aboriginal language should be acceptable as the second language for entrance to the university and that aboriginal students were pressing for this.

Speaking about his subject, fine arts, Ian felt that the attitude of the university's faculty members to aboriginal art was racist to some degree. He felt that aboriginal art was as valid as European art and should be accepted as such.

Judy also mentioned having to face stereotyping in her early education and felt that fighting against it was quite a struggle. She felt that the "system" basically expected academic failure from Natives, but she seemed to take satisfaction in reversing these ideas in her case.

Judy also had been involved in the protest against Lara's confirmation, and felt that Lara's confirmation as director showed a lack of sensitivity to the aboriginal students on campus in that they felt the director should be of aboriginal descent. This corroborates Beth's point that employment equity is an important issue in the university setting.

Judy reported discussions where the dean failed to recognize what she considered as her right to talk to the director about issues. The dean suggested that she should not expect to deal with the director, which would be normal in aboriginal communities, but instead should deal with Native Student Services staff.

Judy related an example in a drama class which, she felt, illustrated a lack of sensitivity by both students and instructor. During a role-playing exercise she felt that a stereotypical view of aboriginals was being put forward. She was upset by this incident but turned it to an advantage saying that she had worked hard in the class and in later presentations to "show" the others.

Judy felt that, although there was still much stereotyping of aboriginal people in the media, the fact that some non-Natives were joining the Aboriginal Student Society and others were taking Native studies courses was good and did much to increase awareness and sensitivity.

Judy was of the opinion that her European looks had spared her from much negative treatment or discrimination and reported that when she pointed out in class that she was aboriginal she could notice "a change of atmosphere" in the classroom. Judy was not aware of a formal policy for university instructors to have cross cultural training; however, she did not see this as a serious deficiency since she believed that the issue should be addressed on an individual basis by instructors. She felt that instructors should pay attention to negative comments on course evaluations even if only one or two students were involved.

The next objective was to increase overall awareness of and sensitivity to the teachings of aboriginal perspectives and content in appropriate courses and programs.

Rhonda had already mentioned that she thought the aboriginal languages should be used as entry requirement. Effectively, this was incorporating them in the curriculum for aboriginal and other students although the proficiency was gained outside the university. Rhonda and Ian had also mentioned that the fine arts department didn't seem to appreciate aboriginal art. They would have appreciated having aboriginal art acceptable as a greater part of the course requirements for the program.

Rhonda said that one of the big problems facing her was "sitting in classes and learning about aboriginal culture in a third person way." Here the problem was not so much the inclusion of aboriginal content, but the way in which the material was presented.

Noreen argued that inclusion of aboriginal cultural elements was very important and spoke about an example, also mentioned by Alan, of aboriginal medicine compared with the western type. She felt it was important that aboriginal beliefs not be ridiculed, and that achieving this would require tolerance and understanding from the various faculties and faculty members. She felt that sensitivity to aboriginal culture and inclusion of relevant aboriginal content was a strength of the UCEP, which she was presently completing, but she emphasized that such sensitivity was crucial if aboriginal students were to feel comfortable in a post-secondary setting.

Also, Peter felt that including aboriginal cultural content in programs was important, and that this had been a strength of the UCEP. For example, he felt that talking about Native history and culture where appropriate helped keep aboriginal students in touch with their culture and gave them strength.

Alice thought that it was important to teach courses from a Native perspective but felt that universities were very reluctant to change the educational system to incorporate aboriginal cultural elements. She argued that this would be a major change, and that change was typically slow in university settings. She said that some colleges had gone further than the university in trying to make the cultural environment more comfortable for aboriginal students, and that the university could go further in this direction.

Alan felt that approaching learning from a student centred point of view meant including examples and materials which would be of relevance to the students; this would, of course, include materials of relevance to aboriginal students. The inclusion of offensive materials or using teaching methods which made certain students feel devalued was contrary to good andragogy. He argued that, despite the protestations of some professors, the inclusion of relevant materials and examples had no potential to compromise the integrity of a discipline. However, he went on to explain that subjects such as law and history, and to some extent anthropology, sociology and educational foundations, had content about which aboriginals and non-aboriginals would be unlikely to "hold the same truths."

In Alan's view the inclusion of aboriginal content was part of the university's Aboriginal Student Policy which had not yet been fulfilled.

He knew that the School of Native Studies had adapted curriculum and teaching methods and that some culturally sensitive instructors had done so on an individual basis in other areas of the university, but he knew of no other conscious effort to incorporate aboriginal content or teaching methods. He felt that this was a loss to education generally, since there were examples where the western scientific approach could benefit from aboriginal teachings.

Beth felt that it was difficult to incorporate Native cultural elements into programs, and that it was her experience that aboriginal students, as a general rule, did not want this. She explained that in many cases aboriginal students wanted to acquire the skills; they would pick up on the aboriginal aspect of their lives on leaving university.

However, Beth pointed out also that the medical faculty had incorporated a lot of ideas from the aboriginal perspective in terms of non traditional healing and aboriginal public health issues.

Dan was of the opinion that the way to add aboriginal cultural elements to a program was by trying to make the content and examples relate to the group of students in the class, and that this was a general method adopted by successful teachers in any case.

Ed talked about the program of Native studies, which is by its nature mainly aboriginal content and an area of legitimate academic concern. Regarding the School of Native Studies, he emphasized the links between the school and other faculties, which was a way of bringing aboriginal and other curriculum together.

Fred felt that while his office could work to increase the general levels of awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students, it was more difficult to get elements included in curricula, since decisions on this were, to a great extent, in the hands of individual professors not all of whom may be sensitive to the issues.

Gary said that there were a number of examples of enhancing the law curriculum to include aboriginal aspects. He reported that there had been an upsurge of interest in this by law professors in his faculty. In some cases Gary supplied materials to other instructors but indicated that the decision to incorporate the material into the curriculum was made by the individual instructors. Gary also mentioned the Perspectives program which was being examined for inclusion in the program as a credit course. Several members of faculty were providing input on this issue.

Although she spoke quite a lot about the inclusion of aboriginal cultural elements in the university setting generally, Lara did not suggest that such elements should be incorporated into curriculum.

Kenneth had taken a Native studies program, and clearly this had included aboriginal content in the curriculum. Also, he made the point that some course content was offensive to aboriginals even if presented in medical or scientific terms. He mentioned a case where he felt that the conclusions to be drawn from a presentation were "almost racist."

The next objective was to provide the following services in consultations with the aboriginal communities and appropriate university units: a community outreach program, pre-admission counseling, orientation programs, personal and academic counseling, referrals to additional services and agencies, housing the Aboriginal Student Council, tutorial services.

Regarding community outreach programs, Carl mentioned that the aboriginal community had been working for many years to obtain outreach services and educational services, including university and other post-secondary level courses. He indicated that outreach programs would be offered provided there was a band or community resolution to that effect, and that the programs would be offered on a full cost recovery basis. The determining factor was often, therefore, the ability of communities to provide funding. Other factors related to location and issues, for example, population density.

Carl mentioned also the long-standing aboriginal desire to have a Native college for the province. Carl reiterated that, in his view, aboriginal communities still desired more outreach delivery of programs. The basis for offering outreach programming was a needs assessment and some indication of educational levels in the community.

He felt that there had been some progress in the previous three years, but that there was a need for further developments. He mentioned one successful example of outreach in a program offering the B. Ed. degree but indicated that funding for other programs had not been forthcoming, despite the fact that there would be many advantages in increasing the proportion of aboriginal teachers in the province.

Rhonda and Judy mentioned the Student Ambassador Program as one which "reached out" to aboriginal communities but indicated that it was aimed at attracting aboriginal students to on-campus programs and not to setting up new programs in remote locations and communities.

Alice felt that the aboriginal community members had expected more outreach programs from the university. Alice spoke about several outreach programs. One in a nearby centre, for example, was not formally affiliated with the university but was able to offer university level courses such as Cree which were accepted for credit.

She mentioned that there were some tensions between the university and community relating to the oral tradition of Cree and the linguistic and structural approach adopted by the university. She also pointed out that the university applied standards to teaching which may not be appropriate in outreach situations. Alice said that outreach programs were usually initiated by communities on a needs basis. In clarification, she pointed out that the School of Native Studies' mandate was to provide programs on campus and not to offer outreach programs.

Alan mentioned the need for a funded liaison program which would help in establishing more community outreach programs. He felt that the interaction between university and community would be improved in many areas, including the offering of outreach programs, by such a program.

Dan mentioned that dropout rates tended to be high for aboriginal students who attended on-campus programs and that this tended to be less of a problem for outreach program. He felt that this was one reason for the aboriginal desire for more outreach programs and that the difference was the sense of community and support offered through the family and community supports.

Noreen's experience indicated that the university offered extensive pre-admission counseling. She mentioned, for example, her discussions with Lara about her application. Noreen had received considerable help during this counseling process and said that, as a result, she had been cleared to enter the science faculty as her first step to study medicine. The counseling had been useful and had explored various options in a flexible way. Lara also mentioned this example, and indicated that all aboriginal students applying for the TYP were interviewed prior to acceptance.

Also, Fred described how he was presently helping various students through pre-admission counseling. For example, he mentioned his various attempts to help a mature aboriginal student gain entrance to the university program he wanted to complete.

Peter had a quite detailed knowledge of and discussed the hiring of tutors for students on the university's TYP. He knew about this because of pre-admission counseling and information sessions.

Both Alan and Malcolm identified pre-admission assessment and screening as part of the counseling program for prospective students and felt that this was one of the strengths of the TYP.

Gary indicated that his coordination role included considerable recruitment and pre-admission counseling for the law faculty, and that the admission process for aboriginals took into account other factors such as experience.

Sheila and Ian both indicated that the Student Ambassador Program was a form of pre-admission counseling as well as a recruitment and orientation program. Ian pointed out the informal pre-admission counseling nature of the Student Ambassador Program by indicating that when he visited a school he spent a lot of time speaking with groups of aboriginal students. In his view, this was particularly useful for the potential students and he recommended visiting communities more than once to encourage more interaction of this type.

Speaking from her own experience in entering the university, Sheila felt that she had had very useful and positive support from the point of initial application, during her pre-university upgrading, and on entering the university. She felt that the Office of Native Student services had been the main factor in providing support and that the services had, if anything, improved over the years.

In contrast, Judy, another aboriginal student, had first entered the university several years previously to study education. She had left part-way through the course because she felt, at that time, that education as a subject "was not for her." She did not mention whether she had pre-admission counseling prior to her first entrance, although she did point out that she entered university by the usual route, and not through a special route for aboriginal people.

Kenneth reported that meeting culturally sensitive people at the university encouraged him in his initial contacts with the university. He felt that pre-admission counseling had been successful in his case and had been a main factor in his decision to attend the university.

As regards orientation, the only programs mentioned by interviewees were those aimed at providing new university instructors with an introduction to aboriginal student issues as they related to the classroom. These were discussed in relation to increasing the overall awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in the university community.

Some thought that such programs were desirable; for example, Sheila felt that a "Native issues program" would be useful for instructors at the university. She was not aware that orientation programs were offered. Others felt that there were other solutions; for example, although Lara pointed out several times that instructors were sometimes insensitive to the needs and sensibilities of aboriginal students, she did not suggest orientation programs as a solution. She felt that the situation would improve as the number of aboriginal students and professors increased.

Speaking as a presenter of the orientation programs, Fred felt that the time allowed, fifteen minutes, was inadequate. Also, since the sessions were voluntary, there was no guarantee that instructors who would benefit most from orientation actually attended.

Both Alan and Beth felt that the personal and academic advising which went along with the TYP was a major factor in increasing academic persistence on the TYP, and Alan went on to suggest that this also tended to increase participation in the program. Also, Dan mentioned the TYP and its support as a major factor in improving persistence.

As an example of personal and academic advising, Fred indicated that he often acted as a "middle man" or advocate for students who were having problems in faculties.

Also, Gary mentioned that he provided support from the period of the student's decision to enroll and through the first year. He described in detail the extensive academic and personal advice services offered. Gary indicated that he talked to about three aboriginal students each day giving support and encouragement. He made the additional point that academic support may come from other students and that the Aboriginal Student Law Society provided opportunities for this to take place.

Lara mentioned the medical and legal faculties as two units in the university which provided coordinators for extensive personal and academic counseling of aboriginal students. She went on to emphasize the fact that personal and academic advising was particularly important in the first year, because additional support was necessary to replace the support the students would have received if living in their communities.

Lara felt that the TYP and the support provided by coordinators for aboriginal students both in Native Student Services and in the faculties contributed considerably to the improvement in student persistence. She pointed out also that the TYP produced a cohort of aboriginal students, members of which could support each other through the first and subsequent years at the university.

Judy felt that she was more self sufficient than most aboriginal students on campus because she still enjoyed strong family support. As a consequence, she was capable of dealing with problems herself or with the help of her own family and friends. She knew Fred, the new faculty advisor, however, and she was quite confident in his abilities to help out if necessary. She felt that the services were useful for some aboriginal students, and that it was important to have a variety of support available.

Lara mentioned that, in terms of pre-admission counseling, there was now a pre-admission interview with applicants. At this point students were referred to additional services and agencies for upgrading or to continue with different post-secondary programs. No other participants mentioned referral explicitly, although it is a standard part of counseling, both before and after admission.

Rhonda was retiring as president of the Aboriginal Student Council (ASC), and the interview with her was held in the ASC office adjacent to the aboriginal student lounge. She indicated that the lounge was well used and that, of the 500 aboriginal students on campus, about 100 visited the lounge on a regular basis. She estimated that about 200 aboriginal students would visit the lounge during their stay at the university, and that the lounge comfortably held about 20 to 30 students at one time.

Alan felt also that the ASC was an important organization for increasing general awareness of Native students, and felt that the student lounge in which the ASC was housed was also important in that it allowed aboriginal students to feel more comfortable on campus.

Malcolm pointed out that the ASC and the student lounge were provided to facilitate students obtaining personal and academic support from their peers. Although she indicated a high level of personal self sufficiency, Judy found the support of the ASC and the student lounge milieu helpful. She felt the representational and advocacy role of the ASC was valuable and, as an example, said that she had taken an active role in the protest over Lara's appointment.

Malcolm spoke about the TYP and Native Student Services as offering tutorial services. Although the tutorial services were working well in his view, he felt that some students were not active enough in obtaining tutorial help sufficiently early in their programs. This caused him difficulties in obtaining tutors at short notice, but he was aware of the issue and was thinking of ways in which to address it in future years. The Native Student Services unit paid for tutors for the TYP students.

For the law faculty aboriginal students, Gary had explained that tutorial sessions were set up for the first year students. He pointed out the value of the tutorial sessions by indicating that attendance tended to be a predictor of success in the program.

The next objective was to provide an Aboriginal Student Centre on campus to house Native Student Services and its programs as well as offer a meeting place for aboriginal students, their families, elders and the university community for social and cultural events.

Several interviewees mentioned that there was not one central location to serve the purposes mentioned in the objective, however several did mention that some of the activities and functions were carried out in separate locations on campus. For example, Rhonda explained that the aboriginal student lounge was an important meeting place for aboriginal students. Students provided support for each other in both personal and academic issues. However, she strongly felt that the university needed an integrated student centre housing the aboriginal law faculty, the medical students, the School of Native Studies, the Aboriginal Student Council and Native Student Services all together.

Rhonda pointed out that the location of the School of Native Studies off the main part of the campus gave the message that the university considered aboriginal issues a low priority. Rhonda's point was that if, for example, all the sciences were together, then it should be possible to have a Native Student Centre. Making a similar point, Fred felt that the structure of a university often reflected the community within the university and pointed out that the School of Native Studies was physically separated from the Faculty of Arts.

Alice, in contrast to Rhonda, felt that the School of Native Studies was visible and had a centrality within the university context and that this contrasted with the some of the separate units developed for aboriginal students in other institutions.

Alan thought that the university should meet the objective and provide an aboriginal centre. He pointed out that a major university in a neighbouring province had developed a "First Nations House" and that along with its other advantages, a centre would allow the university community to become aware of a concentration of aboriginal students which might be perceived as the beginnings of a "critical mass" and which would encourage change in terms of incorporating aboriginal content into curriculum and teaching methods.

He also argued that many aboriginals may consider the university a "foreign environment" and would perhaps be able to gain respite from this in the more comfortable surroundings of a Native Student Centre. Alan acknowledged that the Native student lounge probably fulfilled this purpose at the moment.

Beth did not mention the need for a centre. She commented that the initiatives relating to aboriginal students were quite diffuse and distributed on campus and felt that the linking together of these initiatives was important. She suggested that there was an organic link between initiatives and that this linking could be encouraged by involving all parties and the university as a whole.

Carl had pointed out that, for as long as he could remember, the aboriginal population had been calling for a college solely for aboriginal students. Calls for an aboriginal student centre within the university perhaps echo this expectation.

Ed made a point on the value of incorporating aboriginal students into the university as a whole. He explained that in setting up the School of Native Studies consideration had been given to the possibility that a "ghetto" of aboriginal students would be created which would limit the students' integration into the rest of the university. He went on to indicate, however, that there was also an understanding that there would be close links between the School of Native Studies and the other faculties, including the Faculty of Arts.

The eighth objective was to develop and administer cooperative and summer employment programs for aboriginal students.

Lara was the main respondent on this issue; she mentioned, as did Kenneth, that aboriginal students were sometimes not welcomed back to their communities after completing university, although she mentioned also that some students had been accepted and had been given important jobs with their communities, in some cases before their programs were complete. She felt community involvement with the university and the programs was a solution. This would involve summer jobs for students but would also include community involvement in the university so that the break for students away from their communities was not so long.

The next objective was to increase participation of the university community in the activities of the Aboriginal Student Services Centre to encourage tolerance, friendship and inter-cultural understanding between aboriginal and other students and staff.

No interviewees expressly mentioned the Native Student Services office as a centre for the university community to participate in encouraging tolerance, friendship, although reference to the Aboriginal Student Services Centre (which did not exist) may have confused the issue.

There were a few comments on improving inter-cultural understanding, however. For example, Rhonda pointed out that the student lounge was one place where some non-aboriginal members of the university community met and interacted with the aboriginal students.

Gary indicated that there were some non-aboriginal members of the Aboriginal Student Law Society and that there were several ad hoc intercultural activities organized throughout the academic year.

The next objective was to develop exchange programs between aboriginal students and university staff and other aboriginal communities in Canada and abroad for the purpose of travel, work or study, as the University's contribution to cross-cultural and international awareness of aboriginal issues.

Ian provided the only example mentioned of the implementation of this objective so far as the international exchange is concerned. He pointed out that several of the university's students had undertaken the exchange program and had visited Australia to study.

The next objective was to encourage aboriginal graduates to be active alumni who will continue to be involved in university life.

Lara mentioned that there were now many more aboriginal students graduated from the university, but no interviewees mentioned alumni involvement.

The final objective was to advocate for aboriginal student's concerns on campus in close cooperation with the aboriginal communities.

Rhonda had mentioned this role as part of the ASC activities, and Lara mentioned the need to involve communities further. Unsuccessful attempts to set up a round table discussion with all aboriginal post-secondary groups is an indication that such advocacy is desired by the student group.

CHAPTER SIX

Goals and Implications

Introduction

Chapter six addresses the remaining subsidiary research questions:

1. do participants have goals other than those expressed in the policy; and
2. which of the steps taken to improve aboriginal student participation and academic persistence have been the most effective?

It does this by examining the policy goals both expressed and unexpressed and considering the implications leading from these goals. It identifies those policy measures which were considered more important by the respondents because they were more effective in improving aboriginal student participation and academic persistence. The chapter goes on to relate literature review findings to respondent comments, and to outline respondent comments which did not relate to the Aboriginal Student Policy or to the research questions directly.

Palys (1992) has pointed out that, during interviews which consist largely of open ended questions, people tend to mention those points first which are most important to them. The first issues addressed in the interviews were the goals of the Aboriginal Student Policy. If Palys' proposal is correct, these comments were probably more important in the respondents' eyes in terms of improving participation and academic persistence than the points they made later. Consequently, the initial comments made are related in Section One of this chapter which concludes with an analysis of the comments. Although Palys' notion may be speculative, the order of reponses provided a useful organizing framework.

Section Two relates the initial comments made by respondents to similar points made in the literature review in Chapter Two, while Section Three performs the same function for the respondents' remaining comments.

Interviewees also made comments about issues which were not addressed by the university's policy on aboriginal students. These comments, in some cases, related to goals which were not expressed in the policy, and in other cases they concerned problems, or suggestions, relating to aboriginal attendance at the university. Section Four deals with these issues. Section Five links the themes to the literature to the policy objectives, provides comments, and considers future studies.

Section One

Initial comments - what mattered most

Rhonda, an aboriginal student at the university, mentioned the Quota System first and then the Transition Year Program.

Quincey, Noreen, Peter, and James were all University College and University Entrance Program students. Quincey first mentioned the TYP and then the UCEP which was offered by the local vocational college. Noreen, mentioned the TYP and the UCEP and also the set aside seats in different faculties at the university. Also Peter mentioned the TYP as being the most important element addressing the goals of the Aboriginal Student Policy. James named the UCEP and the TYP during the initial moments of the interview.

Alan, Alice, and Beth were senior administrators at the university. Alan mentioned three major initiatives: the Aboriginal Student Policy itself, the creation of Native Student Services, and the TYP. Alice first mentioned the Native student quota and then the TYP. Beth mentioned the Aboriginal Student Policy and then mentioned Native Student Services and the TYP.

Carl, a senior member of the department of advanced education in the province, first mentioned outreach programs as a way to provide educational services to aboriginal people. He then mentioned the calls from the Native population to have a college solely for aboriginal people. Dan, Acting Director of the School of Native Studies first pointed out the percentage goal (quota) for aboriginals by faculty as a major way of improving aboriginal student participation. Ed first mentioned the formation of a policy to improve Native student participation. Fred, Student Services Officer, first mentioned the quota, but criticized it in terms of the lack of success that he felt it had achieved. He went on to mention the TYP which he felt was working exceptionally well.

Gary, coordinator of the program for aboriginal legal studies, spoke first about his program and the reason for setting it up, which was the underrepresentation of aboriginals in the legal profession.

Sheila, coordinator of the Student Ambassador Program, first mentioned the program that she was involved with. Lara, Director of the NSS, spoke first about her main area of involvement as director.

Kenneth, an aboriginal student at the university, first talked about research studies as being an important way of addressing the problems related to aboriginal student participation and academic persistence. Malcolm, coordinator of the TYP, first drew attention to interactions between Native students and non-Native instructors and the need for a greater understanding of aboriginal culture and heritage in the university setting.

Ian, an aboriginal exchange student, first mentioned the quota system and compared it favorably with the progress made in his home country of Australia. Judy, a Canadian Native student, first spoke about the TYP and thought that it was a good initiative. She then went on to speak of quotas and special programs as useful measures.

Summary

Examination of the above points seems to bear out Palys' view that interviewees, when asked open-ended questions, will tend to say what is important to them first.

In several cases, the first point raised was directly related to the activity in which the respondent was closely involved. The four UCEP students all spoke of the UCEP as being an important part of improving Native student participation at colleges and universities, although it is not part of the university's policy. Also, those respondents closely linked to the university's Aboriginal Student Policy mentioned aspects of that policy as being important in increasing participation and academic persistence.

The following elements were introduced early in their interviews by more than one respondent: the TYP, the aboriginal student quota, the Aboriginal Student Policy, and NSS. On the other hand, individual respondents first mentioned the aboriginal program in the law faculty, the Student Ambassador Program, set aside seats, outreach programs, interactions between Native students and non-Native instructors, special programs, and research studies on aboriginal student access. It is important to note that the above analysis refers only to the initial comments made by respondents and the notion that these items are the ones that were considered more important or valuable by respondents. The data presented in chapters four and five show that respondents went on to discuss additional issues during the course of their interviews.

Section Two

This section examines the initial comments made by respondents in relation to the literature review in chapter two.

TYP

Many of the respondents felt that the Transition Year Program was the most important element of the Aboriginal Student Policy. Several authors in the literature review also pointed out that elements of this type of initiative had been successful in other settings. The point was raised by Telidetzki (1988) in her study dealing with the underrepresentation of aboriginal people in law faculties. She described preparatory programs as being important in addressing the imbalance. Respondent Gary made similar points in discussing the program he coordinated which had many of the same objectives and methodologies as the one mentioned by Telidetzki, which had also been successful.

Cummings (1984) outlined pre-college and undergraduate programs which had support components similar to those used in conjunction with the TYP in that they provided orientation, tutoring, and personal counseling. He reported that these programs were successful with Hispanic and American aboriginal students.

Faith and Sturrock (1990) pointed out that successful distance education, although different in design from the TYP, had some aspects in common. For example the program described by the authors allowed the aboriginal students to work at their own slower pace. The TYP also offered a reduced workload for aboriginal students, but on the university main campus as opposed to in outreach centres.

Gaylord (1989) also described pre-enrollment programs aimed at university-bound aboriginal students. These were similar to the programs mentioned by Telidetzki, and similar to the TYP in that the programs provided a transition from school to university. They differed from the TYP in that the TYP lasted for a full year, provided students with university credits for the courses they took, and allowed them to transfer to faculties on successful completion of the program.

Also, Hurlburt (1984) described a program for aboriginal university students which offered additional support in the university context similar to that offered by the TYP.

Lang and Scarfe (1986) and Mackenzie and Beaupre (1981) described further programs with aspects in common with the TYP. The main similarity was the formation of peer groups of aboriginal students, and this was mentioned by several respondents as a positive feature of the TYP. The authors argued that support provided through the formation of these groups was important to the success and retention of aboriginal students.

In relation to the TYP, it is clear that the design of the program was innovative. Other institutions have produced programs with some of the elements of the TYP, but none were found which were identical. However there were several examples in the literature which indicated that individual elements of the TYP have produced improvement in aboriginal student participation and retention.

UCEP

The four UCEP students interviewed all pointed to the program that they were currently taking at the local vocational centre as being crucial to their eventual participation in the college and university sectors. This program differed from the others identified by respondents in that it was not offered by the university; it was provided by the local vocational college in cooperation with the university.

Pre-enrollment academic upgrading of this type was consistent with several of the projects already mentioned. Further, Mackenzie (1982) described a successful program which included academic upgrading as a precursor to competency based training and Riffel and Sealey (1987) noted that academic upgrading was a beneficial precursor to post-secondary education.

Since the UCEP offered upgrading at a faster pace than the regular academic upgrading at the vocational college (8-10 months compared with 15-20 months) it addressed the problem Fred raised regarding total study period. However, the increased pace of the program contradicted the advice of Faith and Sturrock, who advocated a slower pace for aboriginal students.

NSS

The provision of services to aboriginal students by NSS was considered by several respondents to be a major factor in improving the academic persistence of aboriginal students at the university. It was also clear from interviews that many of the students and university administrators saw the TYP and NSS as one package. The TYP provided a reduced workload for aboriginal students, access to faculties on successful completion of the program, and also provided considerable support for students in terms of individual counseling and tutoring.

NSS offered its services to all aboriginal students at the university, but the TYP initiative formed a major part of its responsibilities. As has already been mentioned, there was considerable support in the literature for the notion that student services could improve aboriginal student academic persistence. In another example of this, Moore-Eyman (1981) noted that the University of Calgary did not offer modified shortened programs for aboriginal students but instead offered additional support services such as tutoring, a study area, a student club office and a student lounge.

Quota

Several of the respondents referred to the quota of aboriginal students as being an important method for improving aboriginal student representation at university level, although they did not always use the term "quota." This point was echoed by Martinez (1985) in relation to underrepresented minority students in California. Telidetzki (1988) also referred to the level of representation of aboriginal people in university programs although she did not refer to a target or quota explicitly. In his study on underrepresentation of minority groups in health education, Flack (1980) pointed out also that an increase in the proportion of aboriginals in these groups was necessary. Again, however, the author did not mention an aboriginal quota explicitly.

In his book on the social responsibilities of universities, Bok (1982) argued that fixed quotas were "only slightly less questionable" (p. 92) than admitting minority students with little promise of being able to pass the regular courses. He felt that if minority students were admitted who stood little chance of being successful, universities might feel pressured to reduce academic standards for these students; Bok argued strongly against this practice. However, the author went on to indicate that preferential admission of minority students who were qualified, but who possessed lower grades and test scores than majority students, was, on balance, a reasonable approach to improving minority student participation. The university's quota policy was based upon the notion of preferential admission for qualified aboriginal applicants and was not a fixed quota as such.

Policy

Several respondents mentioned the formation of policy with respect to aboriginal students as being a major factor in improving aboriginal student participation and academic persistence. This was one of the main points made by the University of Nevada System Student Minority Outreach Task Force (1988). The task force argued for such policies in its main recommendation and indicated that the formation and implementation of aboriginal student policies was the institution's responsibility. P. Walton (1978) argued that setting policy was important, and further suggested that aboriginal people should be involved in the formulation of policy. Similarly, Telidetzki (1988) noted that setting an entry policy for aboriginal people was important in establishing a reasonable representation of aboriginal people in the legal profession. In his study on minority students dropping out of post-secondary institutions, Stuhr (1987) recommended also the formulation and implementation of an aboriginal policy as a way of improving aboriginal student attrition. Bok (1982) argued that institutions should address the important moral issues affecting them, including underrepresentation of certain groups, by setting forth policies and also by making public "the reasons and arguments that support them."

Law faculty

Respondent Gary spoke about the university's program aimed at enhancing Native student participation at the law faculty. This point was also discussed at length by Telidetzki (1988). The program she described at the University of Saskatchewan had similar aims to the one coordinated by Gary and was based on the same notion of redressing the underrepresentation of aboriginal people in the legal profession. Telidetzki mentioned aboriginal involvement in setting up and operating the program; Gary pointed out that there were many links between the program he coordinated and aboriginal community members. Telidetzki discussed the importance of preparatory programs; this was also mentioned by Gary. Both programs included admission policies specific to aboriginals.

Student Ambassador Program

Respondent Sheila spoke about the Student Ambassador Program as one of the main vehicles for promoting recruitment of aboriginal students to the university's programs. Although the authors reported in the literature review did not mention this type of program explicitly several of them highlighted the importance of the recruitment process. For example the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force (1990), Cummings (1984) and the University of Nevada System Student Minority Outreach Task Force (1988) all pointed to the recruitment of aboriginal people as an important component of their institutional policies.

Outreach Programs

From his government department perspective, Carl spoke about outreach programs; he considered these to be one of the most beneficial methods of delivering education services to aboriginal people. There is a large amount of literature on this topic, and the review in Chapter Two highlighted several instances where the method has produced good results. For example, J.T. Walton (1994) described the outreach delivery of business programs to Metis settlements. Friesen (1986) described the University of Calgary's outreach program which delivered teacher education to aboriginal students and which incorporated campus study as a second phase of the program. Also, Lidster (1978), writing on community adult education in the North West Territories, argued strongly in favor of outreach delivery in sparsely populated areas.

Student-Instructor Interaction

One of the respondents, Malcolm, pointed to the area of non-Native instructors interacting with Native students and the importance of cultural understanding in that situation. The same point was echoed by Telidetzki (1988), who argued that cultural awareness and the commitment by teaching staff to the ultimate success of the student was also important. Several writers have pointed out that it is often beneficial for aboriginal students to be taught by aboriginal teachers, and consequently many authors described post-secondary programs aimed at training aboriginals to be teachers of aboriginal students in the school system.

In this respect, Abel (1994) described a program in Montana aimed at producing excellence in aboriginal mathematics and science teachers. On the same theme, Moore-Eyman (1981) described an outreach program offered by the University of Alberta which allowed aboriginal post-secondary students to move into teaching positions on completion of a two year certificate program.

More (1984) spoke to the beneficial nature of aboriginal teacher education programs when he pointed out that, in many cases, the graduates of such programs tended to go on to teach other aboriginal students.

Friesen (1986) had described a program to produce aboriginal teachers. He went on to outline some of the improvements resulting when the graduates of the program began teaching in aboriginal schools. He pointed out as well some of the negative aspects relating to criticism over academic standards in those schools.

More critical of existing teacher education programs for aboriginal people, Josephson (1986) felt that the only way for aboriginal people to retain their distinct culture was to obtain control of their own universities. In the author's view this would produce a much closer congruency between instructor and student and would be less likely to lead to cultural assimilation by teachers during training or by the aboriginal students eventually dealt with by the teachers.

Elofson and Elofson (1988) were of the opinion that it was important to incorporate aboriginal beliefs and values into curriculum but that teaching methods also were important and should be closely related to the aboriginal students' cultural values. Similarly, More (1984) indicated that changes in instructional method must complement curriculum changes. He suggested that teachers of aboriginal students should use methods which capitalized on the aboriginal student strength in holistic and simultaneous processing and which compensated for the relative weakness in verbal coding.

Stuhr (1987) found that problems based on the cultural difference between Caucasian teachers and aboriginal students at the community college level was one reason for aboriginal student dropout. The university's provision of orientation sessions, mentioned by several respondents, was an attempt by the university to improve the teacher-aboriginal student relationship by producing a better understanding of aboriginal student perspectives in instructors. However many respondents felt that the sessions were not effective because not all instructors attended, and that the sessions were of too short duration.

Completing the analysis of points first mentioned by the respondents, were three points related to special programs, research studies and set-aside seats. Special programs for aboriginal students are discussed by many authors in the literature reviewed and has been addressed above. There was no explicit mention of set-aside seats in the literature reviewed which indicates that this is a relatively unusual policy measure, although it is clearly linked to recruitment, quotas, and admission policies which were discussed at length. The comment on research studies as a way of enhancing aboriginal students' participation and academic persistence was unique to one respondent and probably arose because of the interview situation.

Section Three

In this section, other points made by respondents in relation to the aboriginal student policy are examined in conjunction with points made in the literature review in Chapter Two. Most of the points made by respondents have been addressed in Section Two since they were mentioned early in their interview by one or more of the respondents. According to Palys (1992), the points raised in Section Three probably mattered less to respondents in general than those made in Section Two which were mentioned first by at least one respondent.

In discussing the first objective of the policy: informing aboriginal communities of the university's programs, Alan indicated that, in his view, a liaison officer, working with NSS, should be funded by the university to provide this function. A similar point was made by Sharkey (1987) and his coworkers in their study of intervention methods for reducing the attrition rate of minority students. The work related to Black undergraduate university students in Delaware. The authors pointed out that an associate provost was appointed to coordinate student retention activities. They argued that the creation of a university funded position indicated commitment, on the institution's part, to the objective of improving minority student retention. The same principle of demonstrating commitment applies to Alan's suggestion, although the liaison officer would be focusing on recruitment rather than retention.

Many respondents spoke about methods of increasing awareness of aboriginal students on the university campus in general. The work of Sharkey (1987), mentioned above, went on to indicate that awareness of aboriginal students and issues on campus could be enhanced by formal methods which indicated acceptance of aboriginal issues. Friesen (1986) made a similar point by indicating that a philosophy of biculturalism was essential to the success of aboriginal students in the university setting. Elements of this bicultural approach, such as a Native centre, also served to raise the profile of aboriginal students on campus.

Informal approaches such as aboriginal awareness events or round dances produced by students in the aboriginal students' society also tended to increase the overall awareness on campus, according to some respondents. Pointing out the importance of such activities, Lee (1983) indicated that social and cultural factors were the most important in deterring aboriginal student attendance and retention in post-secondary institutions; increasing the overall awareness and sensitivity to aboriginal students would tend to reduce the deterrent effect of these factors.

According to respondents, the formation and activities of student groups such as the Aboriginal Students Council provided a focus for increasing the awareness of aboriginal students on campus. It provided further opportunities for the formation of peer groups such as those described by Lang and Scarfe (1986) and Mackenzie and Beaupre (1981).

Several of the aboriginal student respondents spoke of aboriginal languages in relation to entrance requirements. The importance of language skills in education was highlighted by Smith and Pace (1987), Friesen (1986), and Martinez (1985). Whiteman (1986) pointed out that aboriginals have been learning in a foreign language environment since 1568, and Telidetzki (1988) noted the fact that English was a second language for aboriginal people and that this had contributed to their underrepresentation in the legal profession. Medicine (1986) described the use of aboriginal languages as the language of instruction in a variety of programs and in her view this had led to a cultural revitalization. Also Riffel and Sealey (1987) indicated that the use of aboriginal languages was advantageous.

None of the interview respondents suggested that aboriginal languages should be used for instruction, although several mentioned the importance of acknowledging aboriginal languages in that such respect demonstrated a valuing of aboriginal culture and aboriginal students. In line with this suggestion, several authors indicated that, if instructors had a basic knowledge of the language of the minority groups in their classrooms, this could help create a more productive atmosphere. Mackenzie and Beaupre (1981) made this point in relation to aboriginal students while Taborek and Adamowski (1984) made the same point in relation to Chinese students.

Many respondents spoke of the importance of incorporating aboriginal cultural elements into curriculum. Charles (1981), Mazurek (1988), Stuhr (1987), Taburek and Adamowski (1984), the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (1990), Elofson and Elofson (1988), Friesen (1986), Green (1990), Josephson (1986), Lee (1983), More (1984), Medicine (1986), and Rainer (1980) all noted the importance of this point.

Several interviewees argued strongly that the university should establish an aboriginal centre in one location on campus. Faith and Sturrock (1990) and Archibald (1986) described the effectiveness of educational centres for aboriginal people although, in their examples, these centres were not located on the university campus. Friesen (1986) and Moore-Eyman (1981), however, spoke to the beneficial effects of an aboriginal student centre situated on campus.

Section Four

Unexpressed goals and general points

This section incorporates respondents' comments which were not directly related to the Aboriginal Student Policy. These points fell into two categories: unexpressed goals and general points. The first part of the section details the additional points made by each respondent while the final section summarizes the main points made and identifies unexpressed goals.

Rhonda indicated that one aboriginal student she knew wanted to apply the post-secondary education she received into conservation, and she knew of others who wanted to help build up the reserves and other aboriginal communities.

Lara and several other respondents spoke of post-secondary education in relation to job skills and gaining employment. Rhonda generalized the issues related to aboriginal students on campus to include handicapped people and other distinct minorities.

Quincey spoke about funding and the problems that he faced as an aboriginal student in dealing with the various agencies involved in the aboriginal student funding process. He also felt that post-secondary education made aboriginal people more closely aligned with "mainstream" society and that it took away some of the feelings that they were second class citizens in their own land. He also mentioned role modeling and its importance in the aboriginal communities. He saw education as an important aspect of lifestyle which would create much more positive living conditions for aboriginal people.

Peter did not favor the TYP because it led to competition between Native people. Peter also mentioned funding and the role modeling effect of participation. James felt that post-secondary education could lead aboriginal students to participation in further post-secondary education.

Alan generalized the discussion on aboriginal people to include human rights issues as they related to all individuals. Speaking as a professor of family studies, Alice argued that the university community needed to review its traditional model of family. She also spoke about employment and its relationship to post-secondary education.

Carl spoke on the relationship between post-secondary education and the solution to some of the problems existing in aboriginal communities. He also spoke generally about study techniques and about the difficulties involved, from the government perspective, in dealing with numerous aboriginal groups, many of whom seemed to have conflicting objectives and purposes.

Dan discussed ideas on "dropping out" from programs as it related to aboriginals. He also mentioned females as another group underrepresented in some faculties. He enumerated some lifestyle issues relating to female students compared to male students.

Ed discussed some of the history of aboriginal student involvement with the university over the years and outlined the development of the aboriginal policy from an administrative point of view.

From his point of view as a student advisor, Fred discussed admissions policy and speculated on the benefits conferred to students by counseling. He also discussed role modeling and suggested that failing aboriginal students do not necessarily discourage other potential students. He felt that potential students would judge the failure based on their appraisal of the individual's qualities. Fred also thought that the results of studies should be implemented. He felt that aboriginal people had been studied enough.

Gary spoke about the involvement of aboriginals in the legal system, and the recruitment processes he coordinated. He also mentioned funding and the fact that this could affect his continuing in the position he held. Gary indicated that it was important to have more aboriginal lawyers because of the high proportion of aboriginals in custody in Canada.

Sheila raised the question of funding the university's recruitment efforts with respect to the Student Ambassador Program. She indicated that the students who made the presentations gained valuable experience during the process. She also pointed out that as an aboriginal student she felt that she and other aboriginal students had a responsibility to represent aboriginal people in university forums.

Lara spoke of the importance of aboriginal graduates settling and working in aboriginal communities.

Kenneth told of his own educational history and some of the effects of stereotyping in society in general. He highlighted the importance of role models to his own progress. He also pointed out that funding could be problematic.

Malcolm discussed his own background and his desire to obtain a doctorate. He also spoke of the need to have a department to deal with the TYP, and his view that this department should grow in size.

Ian drew attention to his background as an Australian aboriginal and compared developments in Canada with developments in his home land. He discussed his art work and forthcoming exhibition in Australia and indicated also that aboriginal art should be more widely accepted by society in general and by university faculty members in particular. He felt also that aboriginal culture should be more widely accepted by society at large than at present. Ian spoke about land claims in Australia and about the position of aboriginals in society following successive waves of immigration. Also he pointed out that problems and issues relating to aboriginal people were a world wide phenomenon.

Judy spoke about her background and the importance of parental involvement and support at the school level. She also felt that aboriginals were sometimes treated insensitively at school. In discussing her involvement in the issue surrounding Lara's appointment, Judy argued that this was a matter of principle and expressed the notion that aboriginal people desired more power and control in the university. She also felt that base funding for aboriginal programs was important. Judy went on to say that the experience of aboriginals in university can vary depending on "how white they look."

Judy made a point, also made by Beth, that the university wanted to achieve a five per cent quota of aboriginal students in order to appear respectable in the community and in relation to other universities. Judy felt that society valued academic qualifications and she aimed to succeed in achieving qualifications in order, partly, to challenge society's low conceptions of aboriginal people.

Summary

The above findings show that, as with the initial points mentioned, the additional points raised by respondents were often related to their own background and position at the time of the interview.

There were some general themes, however, several of which could be identified as goals held by respondents but not expressed in the

Aboriginal Student Policy document. For example, many respondents indicated that post-secondary education would lead to improvements for society in general and to the standard of living of aboriginal communities. Many also pointed out the individual benefits of post-secondary education in terms of employment prospects.

Role modeling was mentioned, both from the point of view of aboriginal students having been influenced by strong exemplars in the course of their own education and from the point of view of their influencing potential students from aboriginal communities.

Several respondents pointed to the aboriginal desire for more control over their post-secondary education. Comments ranged from having more aboriginals in positions of power at the university, to having a separate department dealing with the TYP or with Native issues in general, to the concept of a separate college for Native people.

Two respondents spoke to the unexpressed goal that the university may have in achieving its quota of aboriginal students, regardless of whether this came about by a real increase in student participation or a better accounting for all aboriginal students already on campus.

Some of the points made by respondents seemed to relate more to goals for society in general. These included society becoming more aware of aboriginal issues or accepting aboriginal art, or reducing its level of stereotyping. Another example was the notion of increasing the number of aboriginal lawyers.

Other points mentioned were not related to unexpressed goals, but were additional points brought forward by individuals. These included comments on study techniques or on practical difficulties in dealing with varied communities.

Several respondents linked the problems of aboriginal people to the problems of other under-privileged minority groups in society or to the problems of other aboriginal peoples worldwide. There was also a linking of the educational rights of aboriginals to the concept of human rights in general.

Several of the comments made were reflective; these included discussion on perceptions of the family, a theory of dropping out from post-secondary programs, the history of aboriginal involvement, the effectiveness of counseling, and the power of parental involvement in their children's education.

Section Five

Themes and Comment

This section addresses the objectives of the student policy (appendix 4) in turn, links them to the themes emerging from the study, and includes comments.

Informing aboriginal organizations of the university's programs and services and implementing a recruitment program for aboriginal students.

The Student Ambassador Program was praised by those respondents who were aware of it. Ian, an aboriginal exchange student from Australia, spoke very highly of the program, having been present at one of the presentations. However, several of the administrators and students did not mention the program and some respondents felt that the program was not properly funded by the university. Alan, for example, felt that the liaison function of the university was broader than purely recruitment, which was the main focus of the Student Ambassador Program. He felt that the university needed a funded liaison officer to deal with recruitment as well as other functions such as assessing the educational needs in aboriginal communities and arranging for research to be conducted.

The Student Ambassador Program is a cost effective method of recruiting aboriginal students. The program offers collateral benefits in that the student ambassadors gain useful experience and knowledge during the process. However, the point raised by Alan is valid. Liaison between the aboriginal communities and the university should be set on a more formal footing; however, care should be taken to ensure that aboriginal people and communities can obtain access to the university at a variety of points as appropriate.

Offering the TYP

The TYP was mentioned by many respondents as being the most effective of the elements of the aboriginal policy. Statistics showed that attendance on the program over recent years had increased dramatically and that student retention on the TYP itself was very high. Students were moving into faculties, and again statistics showed that numbers of aboriginal students had increased over the preceding years. For example in 1993-94 there were 17 students identified in the science faculty first year compared to only one in the fourth year. This probably reflects an improvement in access to the faculty rather than poor academic persistence by the aboriginal students.

Many students and potential students felt that the TYP was very important. However other aboriginal students felt that a special program such as the TYP with easier access and a reduced work load constituted a "soft route" into the university, which made other students "look down" on aboriginal students who used that route.

Senior administrators indicated that the attendance in the TYP had increased approximately fourfold over the previous two years and that it was time for the program to be recognized more appropriately and reappraised by the university. Also, since the university had received 197 applications for 80 seats in the program it could be argued that the program needed to be extended further to accommodate more students.

One student commented on access to the TYP and argued that acceptance into the program should not be based on "how Native somebody is." It is crucial that access to this program should be free of discrimination for qualified aboriginal applicants.

Sheer numbers and the dramatic increase in participation in the TYP made it a great success. With approximately 80 students attending the program each year and with approximately 70% of these students moving on to university faculties, the measure is clearly a major element in improving aboriginal student participation.

Improving access to all faculties

Access to all faculties in the university has increased as is shown by the increase in total figures for aboriginal students in the university. There was some confusion among respondents as to the number of self identified aboriginal students on campus. Figures from the registrar's office, however, confirmed that numbers had increased from 227 in 1991-92 to 422 in 1992-93 and to 665 in 1993-94.

The university calendar defined the undergraduate body as being 24 000 for the purposes of determining the quota for aboriginal students. Thus, for 1993-94 the percentage of aboriginal students would be calculated as 2.77% compared to the target of 5%.

Respondents pointed out that some individual faculties, for example law and medicine, had made special arrangements for aboriginal students. It was also clear that the level of response by faculties had varied. However, there was comment that some of the faculties that had been difficult in the past, such as science, were now accepting more aboriginal students.

Some students argued that entry for aboriginals into the arts faculty was made difficult because of the language requirement. They felt that aboriginal languages should be acceptable to fulfill the entry requirement, and one student went on to say that testing incoming students' ability with the language should not be by written examination. The university calendar for 1993-94 showed that aboriginal languages were acceptable to satisfy the language entrance requirement for the arts faculty and that oral testing could be arranged.

As regards set-aside seats, the university calendar outlined that the following additional seats were made available to aboriginal students (dentistry, 1; education, 20; medical laboratory science, 1; medicine, 2; nursing, 4; pharmacy, 1; rehabilitation medicine, 4; physical therapy, 2; occupational therapy, 2;). Some respondents felt that this measure was the most important and it clearly addressed the objective of improving access of aboriginal students to all faculties. As with the TYP, some aboriginal students felt that setting aside seats for aboriginals was belittling although they acknowledged that it was necessary at this time.

Increasing overall awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students on campus

As regards this policy objective, respondents felt that the Aboriginal Students' Council and Native Student Services (NSS) provided ways of increasing awareness and sensitivity. Some mentioned events such as aboriginal awareness week, indicating that while they were enjoyable they were not necessarily attended by the majority of individuals on campus. Events such as these were not mentioned specifically in the literature reviewed, although several authors pointed out the importance of the objective.

Many respondents took the pragmatic view that as more aboriginal students were present on campus and perhaps grouped around a Native student centre, this would raise awareness at least. Others indicated that awareness had been increased and that this had resulted in a backlash which was manifest by racist comments in class or by questions which reinforced some of the myths about Native people.

Many of the aboriginal student participants discussed the topic of awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in terms of classroom interactions. Most of them had experienced or observed what they regarded to be racist comments or attitudes during the course of their education at the university and in other locations.

In some of the examples cited, there appeared to have been insensitivity in the conduct of classroom exercises. In other cases, students or faculty members appeared to have been insensitive during interactions with aboriginal students. However, in further cases it appeared that aboriginal students objected to the content of certain courses because they described situations relating to aboriginal people which were unflattering.

One respondent pointed out that the university had mechanisms to deal with racist incidents and that the Office of Human Rights aimed to help complainants deal with the personal impacts of the incidents and to inform the complainants of options for dealing with the matter, where a racist incident was deemed to have occurred. The university Code of Student Behaviour, the Faculty Agreement and the Non Academic Staff Agreement all contained provisions for dealing with racist incidents.

The fact that there was a process for dealing with the problem confirms that the problem is recognized within the university and should continue to be addressed.

The university did offer orientation programs to acquaint new teaching staff with aspects of aboriginal student culture; however, most comments indicated that the sessions were too short to be very useful, and that since attendance was not mandatory it was quite possible that those new instructors who most needed to attend did not.

Several of the respondents who had instructional experience felt that displaying sensitivity to students in the classroom was good teaching practice and that good instructors would tend to do this naturally.

It seems clear that the policy acknowledges and has taken practical steps to address the problems of lack of awareness of and insensitivity to aboriginal students on campus. Study findings indicated that there was some way to go before this objective was fully realized.

Increasing awareness and sensitivity to the teachings of aboriginal perspectives and content in appropriate course and programs

Incorporating aboriginal perspectives and content into appropriate courses and programs was uniformly welcomed by most writers in the literature reviewed. Many of the respondents also felt that this was important. Some authors also pointed out that a combination of content and appropriate teaching methods was important, and the teaching method point was addressed in the previous objective section.

Respondents pointed out that the medical faculty had incorporated non-traditional healing and aboriginal public health issues into the curriculum and that aboriginal content was being systematically included into curricula at the law faculty.

Although the general view was that inclusion of aboriginal content was valuable, there were some instances which qualified this. One of the respondents felt that, in some cases, aboriginal students desired the acquisition of skills on a particular program and did not want this to be accompanied by aboriginal content if not appropriate. J.T. Walton (1991) had experienced this in coordinating the delivery of business programs to Metis settlements. Communities were fully involved in setting up the program, and they made it clear that they wanted courses such as accounting, mathematics, business communications, and marketing to be delivered in the same way that they were delivered in the campus version of the program, without inclusion of additional aboriginal content.

Respondents suggested that, at times, aboriginal people were prepared to put their culture and heritage "on hold" while they attended a course and obtained skills. Also, several respondents pointed out that even if specific curricula content were not altered, good teaching methods would include using examples and assignments relevant to the students being taught.

As regards the problem of aboriginal students being unhappy with certain course content, one of the respondents suggested that there were likely to be some subjects, particularly law and history and to some extent anthropology, sociology and educational foundations about which aboriginals and non aboriginals would be unlikely to "hold the same truths."

The inclusion of aboriginal content is clearly important and should be used where appropriate. It is also important, however, that when material is included it should be to make a valid point and should not be there simply as a token. More important than this is that teaching should be carried out in a way to ensure that no student in the class feels devalued or threatened in any way. It could be that comments raised by aboriginal students reflected, not racism necessarily, but a general lack of sensitivity to students on the part of some instructors at the university.

Providing a variety of educational services to aboriginal students

In terms of setting up community outreach programs, pre-admission counseling orientation programs, personal and academic counseling, referrals to additional services and agencies, housing the SAC, and tutorial services, respondents mentioned that most of these services were provided by Native Student Services (NSS). These services were provided to the TYP students as well as to aboriginal students who entered the university in the normal way. Many students indicated that the services were important to them and helped them to complete their programs, a point which was also brought out strongly in the literature review.

Providing a centre for aboriginal students, to house NSS and to offer a meeting place for social and cultural events

Respondents indicated that NSS was housed on campus and was operating successfully. However, the fact that NSS had a large number of roles was a concern for some, and the fact that some of the programs which operated under its wing were not fully funded by the university was also of concern. According to the director, the NSS workload was increasing through providing additional services such as pre-admission interviewing. Workload was also increasing because of the larger number of aboriginal students at the university and the enhanced number of potential students applying. In the current year, for example, NSS had dealt with more than 2 000 enquiries from potential students for the TYP.

Students were generally positive about the services provided by NSS, one or two of the aboriginal students indicated that, despite the fact that the services were useful for some, they, personally, did not need that kind of support. These students seemed to take a pride in being self-sufficient.

Although there was not a Native student centre at the university, there was an office for the ASC and a lounge where aboriginal students could meet and talk with others. Many of the student respondents felt this was a valuable resource which allowed them to regain composure and to relax in a familiar atmosphere. It also provided a location for academic discussions with their peers. The provision of a centre such as this was also discussed in the literature review with the general view that it was a very positive and important element.

The ASC president indicated that the aboriginal student lounge was well used. However, the lounge would accommodate only about 20 to 30 people, and the president indicated that only about 100 of the aboriginal students on campus would visit the lounge on a regular basis. She estimated that about 40% of the aboriginal students on campus would visit the lounge at some time during their university career.

It is clear, then, that while the lounge is important for some, it is not used by the majority of aboriginal students on campus.

Some respondents and some of the literature called for an integrated student centre in which most aboriginal students would be concentrated. Respondents also pointed out that such a centre would produce a better awareness of the aboriginal presence on campus; however, since many of the aboriginal students on campus did not use the student lounge, it is not clear that they would prefer to be located in one central position to complete their studies.

Comments made by some of the student respondents indicated that they would prefer not to be treated in any special way because of their aboriginal background and that they would rather enter and progress through the university faculties in the same way as the other students. One of the respondents also pointed out that, in setting up the School of Native Studies, it had been a concern that a "ghetto" for Native students was undesirable and that one of the strengths of university life was meeting with a variety of different people with different backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the study showed that some aboriginals favored the setting up of a Native college or a Native university, a point which has also been made by some authors. The question seems to revolve around the cultural assimilation of aboriginal people into the mainstream culture. Josephson (1986) made this point very clearly in his call for aboriginal universities. Aboriginal students such as Judy, were adamant that although they were proud of their aboriginal background they did not want special treatment and were prepared to "beat the system" in their own way.

Remaining objectives

The setting up of summer employment programs for aboriginal students was mentioned by only one respondent, although it seemed to address the goal of some aboriginal students of returning to their communities to help improve conditions there.

The objective on increasing tolerance, friendship, and intercultural understanding between aboriginal and other students and staff, although desirable, was addressed through measures such as pow wows and aboriginal awareness weeks.

Developing exchange programs was clearly important for those involved but was not widely mentioned by most respondents.

Encouraging aboriginal graduates to become active alumni, although a useful objective, was probably premature at the time of the study. Most respondents felt the key was to encourage more aboriginals to enter the university and become graduates; presumably they would think about alumni associations later.

The final objective concerning advocacy on aboriginal student concerns was not mentioned by most respondents, although several students did mention the issue of Lara's appointment as director of NSS as a non aboriginal person. Advocacy on this issue came from the ASC, but the issue itself was mentioned by several respondents and clearly raised recognition of aboriginal issues on the campus in general.

Comment

Overall, respondents indicated that the Aboriginal Student Policy was appropriate and that implementation was going ahead successfully. Some expressed impatience and felt that the university was paying "lip service" to aboriginal concerns; however, numbers showed that aboriginal student participation was increasing dramatically in the university in general and in the faculties, and that academic persistence was also improving.

It appears that the policy is being successful in increasing aboriginal student attendance; however, it seems to be less effective in increasing acceptance of and sensitivity to aboriginal students on the campus and in class. This is a much more difficult problem to address since it involves the experiences and sensibilities of all faculty members, support staff, and students at the university.

It could be argued from this that the implementation had so far tackled only those aspects of the policy which were relatively easy to achieve. Objectives such as providing information about the university to communities and prospective students, offering the TYP, implementing the quota system for all faculties, and providing locations for Native Student Services and meetings are concrete and are therefore easily demonstrable.

However, for aboriginal students, being accepted at the university means more than filling quotas or being able to participate in programs such as the TYP and thus gaining access to faculties. To them, being accepted means more than being encouraged to attend the university. Several of the student respondents indicated that they felt their aboriginal background was not accepted fully by some students or by some of the teaching staff. One respondent pointed out that her looks meant that she could pass for a non-Native in class and that she noticed a difference in the way she was treated when she revealed that she was an aboriginal. She felt that her acceptance level in class as a "non-Native" was higher than that as an aboriginal student.

The next level of policy implementation should address the more complex areas of increasing overall awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in the university community and increasing overall awareness of and sensitivity to the teachings of aboriginal perspectives and content in appropriate courses and programs. These two objectives of the policy are much less concrete, and progress in these areas is much less easy to demonstrate than is the case for the other objectives. However, this area is crucial to whether aboriginal students feel accepted at the university and it seems likely that successful implementation of such objectives would have a positive effect on aboriginal student participation and academic persistence overall.

Implications for Further Study

The study demonstrated that a decision-theoretic approach to policy evaluation can help to reveal unexpressed goals and can indicate some of the complexity surrounding policy implementation. A similar approach would be useful in investigating aspects of the continuing implementation of the aboriginal student policy or other policies at the university or other institutions.

Since the study indicated partial implementation of the policy, future study on the continuing implementation would be useful. One aspect would be an investigation on the inclusion of aboriginal perspectives and content in appropriate courses. Such a study could include an examination of the instructional methods adopted. The study could consider research questions on the degree to which aboriginal perspectives, content, and methods were included and also on the efficacy of this approach from the points of view of those involved, including aboriginal and non-aboriginal students and instructors.

An examination into the awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in the university community at large also would be useful. A study of this type would address knowledge and attitudinal variables and would be conducted over the broad spectrum of people on the university campus. Such a study would be challenging, but it would provide extremely useful information on the acceptance of aboriginal students at the university in general.

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Appendix 1

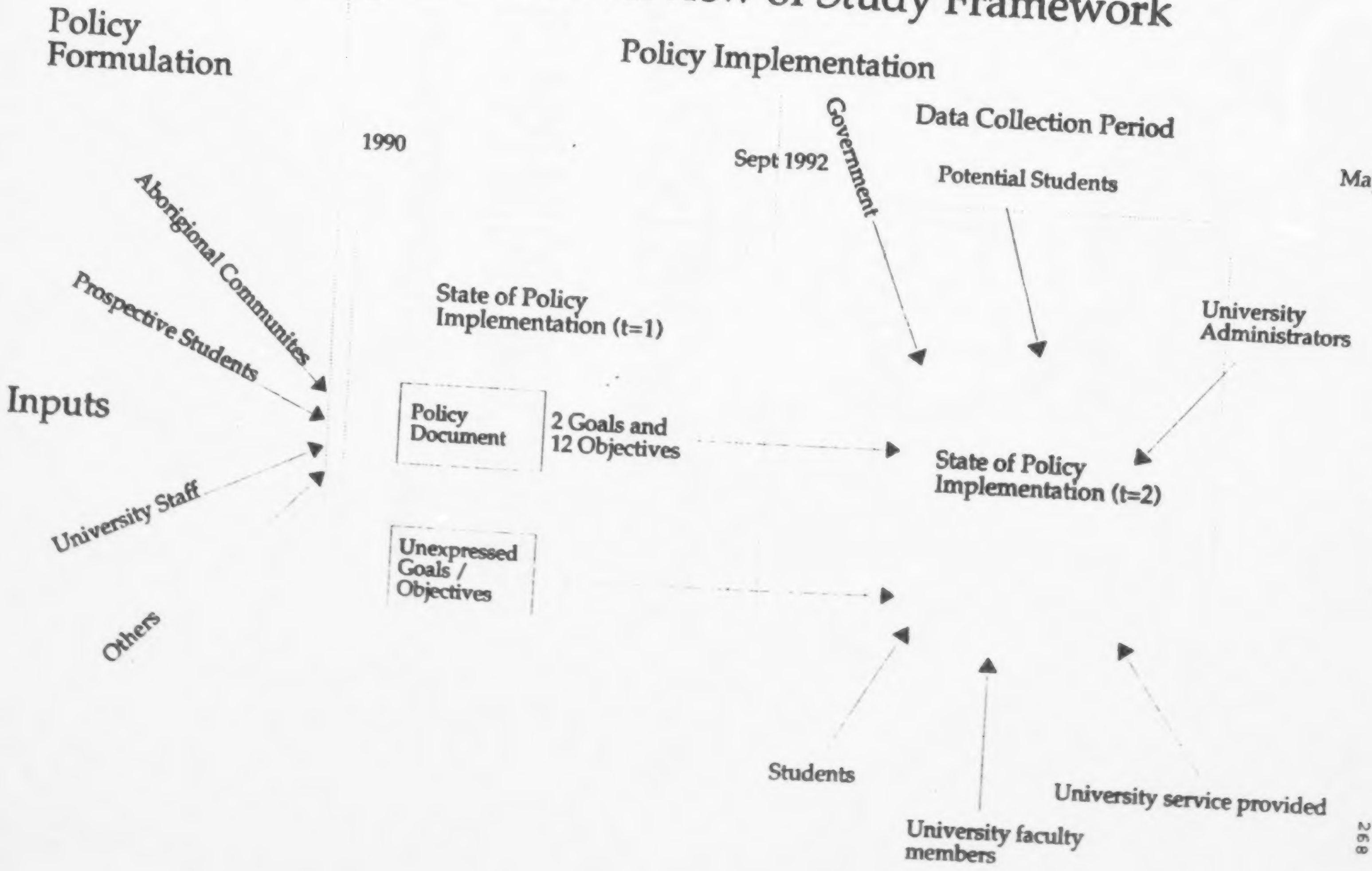
Interview Protocol

- **What measures have been taken at the university to improve aboriginal participation/academic persistence?**
- What are the goals and objectives of each measure?
- To what extent have the plans been implemented?
- Describe how each measure operates to achieve its objectives?
- **How successful have the measures been in improving aboriginal student access/persistence?**
- Do you know the current rate of aboriginal student participation in the various faculties and programs, and how does this compare with previous years?
- What is the aboriginal student academic persistence rate, and how does this compare with other students.
- Which of the measures have been the most effective
- Do you have recommendations on further improvements?
- What difference do you feel increased participation/academic persistence made to aboriginal students?

Note

This protocol was used by the researcher, who phrased the questions based on this protocol and asked the questions orally during the interviews. Additional questions also were posed depending on responses or comments made by respondents.

Appendix 2: Overview of Study Framework


Policy Formulation
Policy Implementation
Data Collection Period
1990
Sept 1992
May 1994
Inputs
Aborigional Communites
Prospective Students
University Staff
Others
State of Policy Implementation (t=1)
Policy Document
2 Goals and 12 Objectives
Unexpressed Goals / Objectives
Government
Potential Students
University Administrators
State of Policy Implementation (t=2)
Students
University faculty members
University service provided

Appendix 3

Brief description of respondents.

Rhonda: Aboriginal student of fine arts and retiring president of the Aboriginal Student Society

Quincey: University and College Entrance Program (UCEP) student at nearby vocational college

Noreen: UCEP student aiming to enter the university to take science as a prerequisite for medicine

Peter UCEP student

James: UCEP student

Alan: Senior university administrator in acting position responsible for student services, including Native Student Services (NSS)

Alice: Senior university administrator and professor in family studies. On sabbatical leave at the time of the interview

Beth: Senior administrator responsible for services at the university, including student services and NSS

Carl: Senior member of the government department responsible for advanced education

Dan: Acting director of the School of Native Studies

Ed: Emeritus professor and previous senior administrator at the university

Fred: Student services officer in NSS, responsible for faculty student coordination

Gary: Coordinator of aboriginal program in Faculty of Law

Sheila: Fourth year aboriginal student at the university and coordinator of the Student Ambassador Program

Lara: Director of NSS

Kenneth: Aboriginal student at the university; graduate of Coordinated University Transition Year Program - precursor of the Transition Year Program (TYP)

Malcolm: Coordinator of TYP

Ian: Aboriginal exchange student from Australia

Judy: Aboriginal student at the university

Appendix 4

Final Draft 1990
ABORIGINAL STUDENT POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF [Name]

Since 1975, the University of [Name], through the Office of Native Student Services, has heightened its efforts to increase the representation of aboriginal people on campus and to provide the support services to facilitate the successful completion of their programs. The enhanced participation of aboriginal people has in return enriched and broadened the intellectual and cultural life of the whole University community.

The University of [Name] by its commitment to equity, seeks through the following policy to address the right of access and support of aboriginal people to a university education. The issue of access and support for aboriginal students required special concern because of the differences which political and socio-economic circumstances have created. Because differences exist and must be respected, equality of opportunity cannot be allowed to mean the same treatment for all. Certain accommodations must be made in order to accord equality to those for whom opportunities for a university education have not existed in the past.

In order to fulfill the University's responsibility toward all aboriginal people (1) of Canada: Indian, Inuit and Metis (2), the University has adopted the following policy for students of aboriginal ancestry.

GOALS

1. To provide a university environment which will encourage full access, participation and success for aboriginal students.

2. To enrich all aspects of the intellectual and cultural life of the University through increased participation of aboriginal students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To inform aboriginal organizations, bands, schools in [Name] and those North of 60, of the University's programs and services and to implement a recruitment program for prospective aboriginal students.

2. To offer a one year credit program for aboriginal students (Transition Year Program) which may qualify them for admission to faculties at the University of [Name].

3. To improve access of aboriginal students to all faculties.

4. To increase overall awareness of and sensitivity to aboriginal students in the University community.

5. To increase overall awareness of and sensitivity to the teachings of aboriginal perspectives and content in appropriate courses and programs.

6. To provide the following services in consultations with the aboriginal communities and appropriate university units:
    - -a community outreach program
    - -pre-admission counseling
    - -orientation programs
    - -personal and academic advising
    - -referrals to additional services and agencies
    - -housing the Aboriginal Student Council
    - -tutorial services

7. To provide an Aboriginal Student Centre on campus which will house Native Student Services and its programs as well as offer a meeting place for aboriginal students, their families, elders and the university community for social and cultural events.

8. To develop and administer cooperative and summer employment programs for aboriginal students.

9. To increase participation of the university community in the activities of the Aboriginal Student Services Centre in order to encourage tolerance, friendship and inter-cultural understanding between aboriginal and other students and staff.

10. To develop exchange programs between aboriginal students and university staff and other aboriginal communities in Canada and abroad for the purpose of travel, work or study, and the University's contribution to cross-cultural and international awareness of aboriginal issues.

11. To encourage aboriginal graduates to be active alumni who will continue to be involved in university life.

12. To advocate for aboriginal student's concerns on campus in close cooperation with the aboriginal communities.